

UNIVERSAL  
LIBRARY



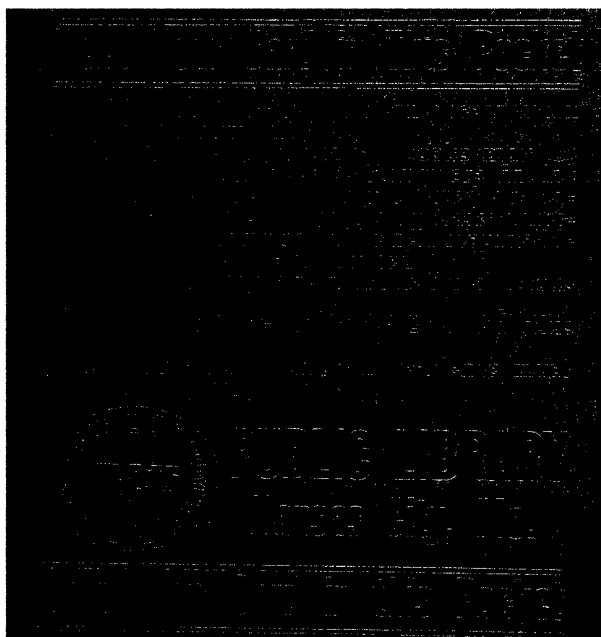
103 583

UNIVERSAL  
LIBRARY

UNIVERSAL  
LIBRARY



103 583









**THE NORMAN WAIT HARRIS  
MEMORIAL FOUNDATION**

THE Harris Foundation Lectures at the University of Chicago have been made possible through the generosity of the heirs of Norman Wait Harris and Emma Gale Harris, who donated to the University a fund to be known as "The Norman Wait Harris Memorial Foundation" on January 27, 1923. The letter of gift contains the following statement:

It is apparent that a knowledge of world-affairs was never of more importance to Americans than today. The spirit of distrust which pervades the Old World is not without its effect upon our own country. How to combat this disintegrating tendency is a problem worthy of the most serious thought. Perhaps one of the best methods is the promotion of a better understanding of other nations through wisely directed educational effort.

The purpose of the foundation shall be the promotion of a better understanding on the part of American citizens of the other peoples of the world, thus establishing a basis for improved international relations and a more enlightened world-order. The aim shall always be to give accurate information, not to propagate opinion.

Annual Institutes have been held at the University of Chicago since the summer of 1924. This series of volumes includes the lectures there delivered, in essentially their original form.

## **SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS**  
**CHICAGO, ILLINOIS**

---

**THE BAKER & TAYLOR COMPANY**  
**NEW YORK**

**THE MACMILLAN COMPANY OF CANADA, LIMITED**  
**TORONTO**

**THE CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS**  
**LONDON**

**THE MARUZEN-KABUSHIKI-KAISHA**  
**TOKYO, OSAKA, KYOTO, FUKUOKA, SENDAI**

**THE COMMERCIAL PRESS, LIMITED**  
**SHANGHAI**

# SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

[Lectures on the Harris Foundation 1926]

*By*

MOISES SAENZ

Sub-Secretary of the Department of Education of Mexico

AND

HERBERT I. PRIESTLEY

The Department of History

The University of California

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS  
CHICAGO · ILLINOIS

**COPYRIGHT 1926 BY  
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO**

---

**All Rights Reserved**

---

**Published December 1926**

**Composed and Printed By  
The University of Chicago Press  
Chicago, Illinois. U.S.A.**

## FOREWORD

The First and Second Institutes on the Harris Foundation dealt respectively with European and Far Eastern affairs. The Third Institute, in the summer of 1926, has been devoted to the problems of Mexico. This volume, entitled *Some Mexican Problems*, contains the lectures of Honorable Moises Saenz, Sub-Secretary of the Department of Education of Mexico, and Professor Herbert I. Priestley, of the History Department of the University of California, and author of *The Mexican Nation, a History*. A second volume, *Aspects of Mexican Civilization*, contains the lectures of Honorable José Vasconcelos, former Secretary of Education of Mexico, and Honorable Manuel Gamio, former Director of the Bureau of Anthropology and Sub-Secretary of the Department of Education of Mexico.





## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### THE PROGRAM OF THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT

By MOISES SAENZ

	PAGE
I. FOREIGN INVESTMENTS AND MEXICAN NATIONAL- ISM . . . . .	3
II. HUMANISM AND THE MEXICAN LABORER . . .	33.
III. INTEGRATING MEXICO THROUGH EDUCATION . .	55

### THE PROBLEMS CONFRONTING MEXICO

By HERBERT I. PRIESTLEY

I. BASIC FEATURES OF THE MEXICAN PROBLEM . .	87
II. THE PROGRAM OF REHABILITATION . . . . .	III
III. THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO . . . . .	141
INDEX . . . . .	171



# THE PROGRAM OF THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT

By MOISES SAENZ



## I

### FOREIGN INVESTMENTS AND MEXICAN NATIONALISM

Foreigners often speak of the many revolutions of Mexico. We Mexicans always mention only one Revolution, and when we write about it, we always spell it with a capital letter. I often explain to my foreign friends that Mexico has had one Revolution—not more than one. It started in 1910 and is still going on. Some people, fond of synthesis, go so far as to say that our Revolution started not in 1910 but in 1810 and that its end is not yet in sight.

To outside observers, the history of the past sixteen years in Mexico may seem an endless succession of revolts, uprisings, petty political intriguing, mock elections, political assassination, radical and confiscatory legislation, and wild-eyed social schemes for the redemption of an Indian who seems to be past saving. To unsympathetic observers, Mexican history since independence is nothing but that. This is a false conception, however. As in Hamlet's, there is method in our madness. There is a sequence to the facts that gives them their

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

meaning; there is a tendency which explains and justifies the Mexican Revolution.

Again, the enemies of Mexico or the casual observers of things Mexican explain this tendency as being political in nature, merely, and imbued with motives of personal gain, the out's trying to get in and all scrambling for graft. But a movement could not persist for sixteen years, rather for one hundred and sixteen years, with graft and human exploitation as a motive. Were we to admit the possibility of that, we should have to admit, too, that not only Mexico but the whole family of nations among which we have lived were devoid of moral sense. The tendency of the Mexican Revolution has not been political. Political issues embodied in persons have often been the starting-point for a new armed movement—a "new revolution" your newspapers would say. Madero against Diaz, Villa against Carranza, Obregon against Carranza, de la Huerta against Obregon—political, personal—the out's against the in's, and all against the people whom they pretend to be trying to help—so say the enemies.

Let me tell you that no sooner have these so-called personal movements started than the age-old question of Mexico takes the field; the landed aristocracy *vs.* the people. When the big issue

## INVESTMENTS AND NATIONALISM

appears, the people take command; general and politician, social prophet and vulgar grafter—they all obey. Knowingly or unconsciously, they line up and the old fight between privilege and destitution is once more in full sway. While the fight is on, false leaders had better beware and foreign nations had better keep off. The Revolution has a cool way of shooting emperors and generals, and she can show such a fine disrespect for diplomats!

Not only since 1910 has this been so; farther back, from the very beginning of independent life, since 1810 all through the century, this question has been the only question in Mexico: Aristocracy, white blood, excessive land holdings, social privilege, political exclusiveness, religious privilege, against the People, against the Indian and the mestizo, the peon, the destitute, the half-slave, against the conglomerate of human beings which have dwelt in Mexico—starved strangers in a land of plenty. Rebel and reactionary, we say in Mexico, have faced each other. What is there in a name! Essentially, a reactionary in Mexico is the man who through special privilege has had too much food; a rebel is one who for a century and more has been suffering hunger.

The struggle has taken on different aspects at different times. In 1810, revolt against Spain in



## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

order to shake off exploitation and misrule; in 1850, the Roman Catholic church, holding more than 50 per cent of all property in Mexico, was the landed aristocracy par excellence, and the war of Reformation dealt heavily with the church; in 1910 Diaz had given the country away to his friends and captains, and his experts in so-called scientific government had managed to become millionaires at the expense of a nation of paupers. The first business of the Revolution, therefore, was to oust the dictator, then to reconquer the land and to put national wealth under the control of the government for the benefit of the many.

Now it happens that many members of this privileged class of Mexico were foreigners. Spaniards had gotten the soil; Americans and Englishmen thought they had the subsoil. So it has come to pass that at the beginning of the second century of our Revolution, in this period of 1910, we have had to deal with the foreign powers, just as in the previous great revolutionary epochs of Mexico we had to deal with them.

When we finally had to do something against Diaz, we found ourselves facing the foreign powers once more. The Spaniards and the near-Spaniards had regained most of the workable land of Mexico. They were also using most of the available water

## INVESTMENTS AND NATIONALISM

supply. Furthermore, the Americans of the United States, the English, and the Dutch were pumping us dry of oil.

Mexico has been called "the mother of the foreigner and the stepmother of the Mexican." The Revolution has tried, is still trying, to give the Mexican a place under the Mexican sun and to wrest from the foreign exploiter that which by right is ours. In its constructive side, the effort is to integrate our people into a nation and to train them to use to better advantage their country and its resources. Internationally, the Revolution has no ax to grind but wants to avoid entanglements by adopting clean-cut legislation and by making the foreign investor conform to Mexican law.

From an international standpoint, Mexican nationalism is, in part, the tendency to regain or to retain our material inheritance. This is a very elementary, literal meaning, a meaning the right of which no one will dispute. Our nationalism should also see to it that national wealth is properly developed and that Mexico is represented as it should be in the world-markets. And now that we have defined our terms let us consider with some detail the present situation in Mexico relating to foreign investments, trying to see to what extent foreign capital in Mexico is a disturbing factor or

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

how our nationalism may be in turn disturbing or imperiling foreign capital.

The total wealth of Mexico in 1912 was estimated at two and one-half billion of dollars in round numbers (\$2,434,241,422). This was, at least, the figure given that year by Mr. Marion Letcher, American consul at Chihuahua. He also estimated that foreigners owned \$1,705,054,180, while Mexicans possessed \$729,187,242. In other words, according to this estimate, the Mexicans own less than one-third of their country.<sup>1</sup>

Since 1912, foreign investments in my country have passed the two-billion mark. Mexican property has, no doubt, increased likewise. Whatever increase there may have been, I do not think that the proportion between Mexican and foreign ownership has changed in favor of the Mexican.

In that same year of 1912, it was estimated that from the \$1,705,054,180 Americans owned 1,057 million; the British, 321 million; the French, 143 million; and all other foreign investors, the remaining 119 million. Proportionally, 44 per cent of the total wealth in Mexico is American; 30 per cent, Mexican; 12 per cent belongs to the British.

Foreign investments in Mexico have been in-

<sup>1</sup> Carleton Beals, *Mexico, an Interpretation* (1923), p. 233.

## INVESTMENTS AND NATIONALISM

creasing since 1912. Robert W. Dunn<sup>1</sup> estimates that at the present American investments in Mexico run to 1,280 millions of dollars. British investments have increased although probably not in the same proportion. In 1923, the Britishers' investment for oil alone was larger than their total investment in 1912. Grand totals in investments are erroneous most of the time, but in my opinion two billion dollars is a very conservative estimate of the total value of foreign investment in Mexico at the present time.

The distribution of this investment by nationality puts the American capital in the lead by a long distance. In 1912, 62 per cent of all foreign investment in Mexico was American. The British were second with only 18 per cent. The Americans represent 57.7 per cent of the oil business in Mexico; the British, 33.8 per cent.<sup>2</sup> The American mining interests, amounting to some 300 million dollars, are from five to six times as large as the British, which come second in importance. In railroads Americans predominate also, although in this field the British are a very close second. American citizens hold one-fifth of the total foreign debt of Mexico.

<sup>1</sup> *American Foreign Investments* (1926), p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> *Moody's Governments and Municipalities*, p. 518.

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

By far the largest foreign business in Mexico is oil. The petroleum industry in Mexico, according to Moody, was valued in 1923 at \$1,050,532,424.<sup>1</sup> This sum represents the value of land, wells, tanks, pipe lines, and equipment. Official figures give the capital invested in petroleum up to December 31, 1924, as 779,931,125 pesos. This figure does not include the value of the land, only the investment in wells, pipe lines, tanks, refineries, ships, and equipment. The figure given by the official records of the Mexican government, even when one adds the probable value of land, is much smaller than the one quoted from Moody and accepted by so careful an authority as Dunn. The discrepancy is due, perhaps, to having counted pesos as American dollars. Moody's figures should, I think, be considered as in Mexican currency.

This is the place to make two distinctions seldom made when dealing with investments in a foreign country. One is the difference between original investment and present value. The other has to do with the returns obtained from a given investment. Careful official estimates put the amount of capital invested in the oil business in Mexico by the close of 1923 at 979,106,619 pesos. The sum takes no account either of loss by watered

<sup>1</sup> R. W. Dunn, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

## INVESTMENTS AND NATIONALISM

stock or other causes or of increase in the value of holdings. Since 1901 the amount of Mexican-produced petroleum sold in ports and at supply tanks returned 1,370,649,650 pesos. Taking off 25 per cent of this amount for expenses, rentals, etc., we get a clear 1,027,987,237 pesos, which is in round numbers 48 million pesos more than the sum actually invested. In other words, since 1901, the oil companies have entirely recovered their original investment besides still holding property greatly augmented in value and still capable of producing enormous profits.

From what we have said about the amount, nature, and distribution of foreign investments in Mexico, the following conclusions seem clear: (1) more than two-thirds of the wealth of Mexico belongs to the foreigners; (2) most of the foreign owners are absentee owners; (3) foreign investments are on the increase; (4) one nationality far outstrips the others in the amount of interests controlled; (5) one enterprise, the oil business, is by far the most important, the oil production in Mexico being larger than the combined production from all other countries except that of the United States which holds the first place.

But figures, after all, are cold entities unless they are interpreted or visualized. Let us see some

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

of the human aspects of the situation in order to get an insight into the social significance of foreign capital in Mexico.

The foreigner in Mexico remains a foreigner all his life. He goes to Mexico as a business man, to make a living, not to live. The foreign colonies in Mexico City have their clubs and their churches, their hospitals and their cemeteries, their saloons and their gossiping parties, all to themselves. One colony has very little intercourse with another. They have only two things in common, these foreigners: their passion for money and their contempt for the Mexican. At the bottom of their hearts all of them are against the government. Most of these foreigners are unwilling to learn Spanish. Very few of them take any interest whatever in the social condition of the country or have an intelligent point of view on any Mexican situation.

Recently I read the announcement that Professor ——— was to give a lecture on Mexican education somewhere in the United States. He was reported to be well informed on the subject, having spent two years in Mexico City. I pity the people who heard this lecture, for I happen to know that this man, during the two years he spent in Mexico teaching in the private school of one of the foreign

## INVESTMENTS AND NATIONALISM

colonies, did not show the slightest interest in educational things in Mexico, never visited a school, and did not even learn a word of Spanish.

The Young Men's Christian Association recently put on a campaign for half a million pesos to increase and improve its program for the benefit of the boys and young men in Mexico. The Mexican government contributed with a liberal amount. So did an American business man living in the United States; but not a penny could be obtained from any French firm; and the oil companies, the all-powerful oil companies, after many consultations and much delay, decided that they could not give a cent either. This monumental piece of stinginess on the part of people who have made millions in Mexico, who have paid as high as 48 per cent dividends, and who do not hesitate to spend fabulous sums to fight the Mexican government—this stinginess, I say, speaks volumes for the attitude of the "Big Foreigner" in Mexico toward the welfare of the people.

The Department of Industry, Commerce, and Labor of Mexico, publishes regularly in the daily press a statement giving the retail price of gasoline in Mexico City and in various American cities. On May 11, 1926, the liter of gasoline was sold in Mexico City for ten cents; in St. Louis, Missouri,



## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

it sold for five and one-half cents; the price in New York was five cents; and in San Francisco, five and one-half cents—all in United States currency. Ten cents in Mexico City and five cents here!

I have never been able to understand, nor does any Mexican, why it is that we have to pay twice as much for gasoline as you do, when many a time it is Mexican gasoline we are both buying. One of the oil magnates is reported to have answered, when once asked about this, "We charge these prices because we can."

I have heard the statement that one-fifth of all the silver circulating in the world has come from a mine still in operation in central Mexico. The people who have helped work this mine go half-naked; their daily food consists of chili-sauce and a few corn cakes; their children cannot go to school. For centuries these miserable people have seen a troop of overbearing foreigners carry away the treasure they themselves had to dig from the bowels of the mountains—their own Mexican mountains.

These are some of the social aspects of foreign enterprise in Mexico. To the business man they may not seem important. To the sociologist they are significant. They point out the need of adjustment. In spite of so much selfishness and lack of

## INVESTMENTS AND NATIONALISM

sympathy from the foreigners, and even of outright exploitation and injustice, in no country of the world is the foreigner looked on with more kindness than in Mexico. This is the experience and the testimony of most travelers in my country.

The political implications of large foreign investments in Mexico can best be understood by remembering what has happened in other countries. China was a happy hunting ground for the foreign financier. China had resources, and she was undeveloped. The home governments backed their respective nationals in their enterprises. The foreign governments collected the Chinese taxes to pay the loans made to China, and they also forced China to accept extra territorial law and tribunals. The country was apportioned off to different powers, like spoils in this new kind of Phoenician war. The spoilers then began to quarrel among themselves until finally they agreed upon a common policy of exploitation. An international trust now functions efficiently toward the complete economic subjugation of China.

The solicitude of the powers has been too much for China. She has been driven to revolution. In spite of her oriental stolidity she has plunged into war. When China gets through, we shall see either one of two things: either she will have shaken off a

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

few of the "influences" now strangling her and emerge a free nation meeting the other nations on equal terms; or, subject to one, she will become the Eastern battlefield of the world.

The case of Cuba teaches us a lesson which strikes home much more directly. At the beginning of the war with Spain the world thought that the attitude of the United States in the case of Cuba was one of a magnanimous offer of independence. American investments in Cuba in 1898 were only 50 million dollars. By 1909, the investments had increased to 141 million. Today it is estimated that they have reached a total of a billion and a quarter. Parallel with the tremendous growth of foreign investments, of American investments rather, Cuba has had to submit to the Platt Amendment, to four military occupations, and to a civil occupation under General Crowder. What, with the amendment, with treaties, and with other less definite arrangements, Cuba cannot now contract loans without the consent of the United States; has given this country a constitutional permit to intervene in a military as well as in a political way for the settlement of Cuban affairs; has given the United States a naval base of the first importance on Cuban shores; has accepted American paper money as the only paper legal tender in the island.

## INVESTMENTS AND NATIONALISM

She agrees to have the sugar trusts in the United States regulate the price of Cuban sugar. Cuba has also entered into a "reciprocity" treaty with the United States, by which she permits importation of American products into Cuba at a reduction of from 25 to 40 per cent, in exchange for the privilege of sending her own products to the United States with a reduction of only 20 per cent.

Judging by Cuba's experience, it would seem that large investments from a strong country in a weak one result in political and economic subjugation. Nearing and Freeman sum up the Cuban situation in the following way:

Theoretically, Cuba is a sovereign state. Practically, the economic and political life of the island is dominated from New York and Washington. . . . The ownership of Cuba lies almost completely in the hands of the National City Bank. . . . American domination of the island is thorough. . . . Cuba is no more independent than Long Island.\*

The technique of this new kind of conquest, the conquest by railroad and by bank, is well known—concessions from the local governments, the more exclusive the better; encroachment upon the interests of the natives; keeping under the wing of the home government; asking its advice for every new important move and claiming its protection on the

\* Scott Nearing and Joseph Freeman, *Dollar Diplomacy* (1925), pp. 193, 174.

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

slightest occasion; trying to bring about local legislation favorable to the business. If unable to do this or if confronted with legislation that is not agreeable, the interests will fight the local government, overtly or openly as the occasion may demand. Propaganda and misinformation through the press, fomenting revolutions, and influencing the home government to accord or withhold recognition, are well-known and very effective devices.

The economic domination of a country by means of a loan is also a well-known process. Have we not seen it at work in China and in Turkey, in Cuba and in Nicaragua? Get a weak country in distress—civil war or financial embarrassment, the weaker and the more in distress the better—offer a loan, making sure that the home government approves of it; if it is possible to have the loan come as a sort of a peace pact after much international nagging, all the better. When negotiations are well advanced and enough publicity has been given to the fact of the loan itself, present your conditions: reorganization of the financial system of the country, fiscalization thereof, inspection of revenues, collecting of revenues.

How well we know the whole story in Mexico, the whole story of foreign exploitation and of incessant and irritating pressure from the Phoenician

## INVESTMENTS AND NATIONALISM

captains. How well we know it from our experience! Economic penetration, political interference, economic subjugation, foreign regulation, armed intervention, annexation—we have experienced them all.

Political interference by the big interests has been frequent in Mexico—constant would be a more exact term—during the past ten years. In these days of imperialism it is very hard to draw the distinction between the action of the big interests and the action of their respective departments of state, or between the acts of the said big interests as private concerns and their acts as nationals obeying orders or following the policies of their home governments in the country of operation. The case has been illustrated repeatedly in connection with the oil struggle in Mexico. Mr. Doheny, testifying before the Senate Committee in 1919, asserted that, following the lead of the Department of State at Washington, the oil companies at certain times stopped paying taxes to the Mexican government. President Wilson, however, as well as prominent officials in his administration, gave the impression that the United States government was subject to constant pressure from the vested interests.<sup>1</sup> I am inclined to take the view expressed by Carleton Beals when he says:

<sup>1</sup> Nearing and Freeman, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

. . . . The Association of Oil Producers in Mexico became a Soviet capable of exercising a more powerful pressure upon the governments of the United States and Mexico, than many a foreign power. The oil interests in Mexico pursued the course of an independent entity. They even created their own army, led by Pelaez. They dictated memorandums, notes, ultimatums to the two governments. . . . In the United States they were permitted, at the peril of wrecking the peace of two sovereign peoples, to conduct an incessant newspaper campaign against Mexico and its government, a campaign of exaggeration, vilification and treachery.

These same people plus the other big companies were among those crying loudest for intervention and among those doing their best to embarrass Mexico internationally. They sent a special delegation to the Versailles Peace Conference to have Mexico excluded from the League of Nations and they tried their best to have recognition of Mexico by the foreign powers withheld as long as it was decently possible.

We have seen military intervention protecting foreign investments. In 1838, a French fleet blockaded Vera Cruz. Soldiers landed and had a battle. We agreed to pay France \$600,000, and they left. They came, so they said, to collect indemnity for losses caused to French nationals. One of the more important claims they came to settle was that of a baker whose tray of newly baked bread had been

## INVESTMENTS AND NATIONALISM

upset or stolen. This war is known in Mexican history as "The Pastry War"—the incident is ridiculous. At the time when it happened, it did not seem so. It was made the occasion for a treaty between France and Mexico. England had to lend her good offices to bring it about. So much diplomacy and international wrangling over a tray of bread!

In 1914 foreign troops took Vera Cruz; later we had several "punitive" expeditions across the border. As in 1838, much diplomatic breath has been wasted trying to explain or justify the matter. Many people think, however, that the big interests, the financial magnates, are at least partially responsible for these attacks on the Mexican nation. Perhaps when history is finally written, the occupation of Vera Cruz in 1914 will appear as a little incident in the economic war of American and British oil interests for the control of the Mexican fields.

Let us go on with our story and see how the Mexican leaders have met these modern Phoenicians, the warriors of the bank draft and the pipe line. Let us see how we are defending ourselves against the economic conquest by the foreigner. In the first place, we've had a revolution. In the second place, and as a result of said revolution, we made unto ourselves a new constitution.

Now it is just this—the fact of the Mexican



## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

Revolution—that the big interests seem to have overlooked in their calculations. The fact of the Mexican Revolution seems to have escaped even the penetration and intelligence of the diplomatic representatives accredited in Mexico. Playing Madero against Diaz, and Carranza against Huerta; strangling a government by an economic blockade; commanding the captains of industry to wage war against a government; sending an endless stream of notes through diplomatic and near-diplomatic channels; diplomatic bullying and bulldozing; vilifying a nation and ridiculing a government—all that, which is what the powers and the interests have done to Mexico during the past decade, has not worked, has not accomplished the ends of the interests, because it has run counter with the Mexican Revolution. The stubbornness of Carranza, the grim determination of Obregon, and the splendid nerve of President Calles have all had a common inspiration, the desire to save Mexico for the Mexicans and to save the Mexicans for Mexico, which is, in synthesis, the Mexican Revolution.

In one of his stories Dr. Henry van Dyke tells us that his little boy once asked him, "Father, who owns the mountains?" Yes, who owns the mountains? In Mexico we know who the owner of the

## INVESTMENTS AND NATIONALISM

mountains is, but we have always been curious to know who the owner of the subsoil is. "Who owns the subsoil?" is the question in Mexico.

Dr. van Dyke answered his son, "God owns the mountains, my boy." The legislator in Mexico was not so poetical; he said, "The Mexican nation owns the subsoil of Mexico," just as we had always known that the Mexican nation owned the inside of the mountains.

It is simplicity in itself, this statement of Article 27 of our Constitution to the effect that the subsoil rights are vested in the nation, yet this little statement inflicted a powerful blow to the arrangements and schemings of some of those gentlemen vaguely known as "the oil men." A great deal of what these gentlemen have said about the Constitution being confiscatory and retroactive is due to this statement.

Let us briefly review the facts bearing on this point:

1. Spanish colonial law and Mexican law have traditionally held the principle that the subsoil rights are vested in the nation.

2. The principle has always been applied to metals in the subsoil, for the exploitation of which, even by the owner of the surface, a concession from the government has always been necessary.

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

3. The spirit of the 1857 Constitution and all legislation on similar matters, as well as the expressed decision of lawyers in the time of Juarez, has been for the consideration of petroleum as a form of subsoil wealth under the control of the government.

4. In 1884, the Mining Code, unconstitutionally put petroleum under a basis different from that of mineral deposits, leaving it the property of the owner of the surface.

5. In 1906, still under Diaz, an attempt was made to put petroleum in the same class as mineral deposits. The interests were in control, and the attempt was a failure.

6. The Constitution of 1917 asserts definitely that the rights to the subsoil riches, such as minerals and hydrocarbons, are vested in the nation.

7. The oil law of 1925, codifying Article 27, takes special pains not to be retroactive and definitely states that rights arising from lands under exploitation prior to May 1, 1917, or from contracts drawn before that date, shall be respected. It also states that all concessions for oil exploitation granted by the president in accordance with previous laws shall be confirmed without cost to the concessionaire.

8. Mexican law, in postulating the nation's

## INVESTMENTS AND NATIONALISM

rights to the subsoil, is not unique. The principle is accepted in practically all countries at the present time.

9. Supreme Court decisions in the United States have declared petroleum a "public thing, subject to the absolute control of the State, which, although it allows it to be reduced to possession, may, at its will, not only regulate, but wholly forbid its future taking."<sup>1</sup>

10. A great majority of the oil companies operating in Mexico do not own the land on which they operate; they have merely leased it. I, for one, cannot see why they have been so loud and insistent about the rights of the owner of the surface when they own so little of it. They say it is a matter of principle with them. I suppose their principle is to deal with the ignorant native owner of the surface rather than with the government of Mexico.

Either from fear of losing control of the Mexican fields or from a dawning conviction of the rights of the government of Mexico the oil men have of late shown a better disposition in their long controversy over oil regulation. At present there seems to be a conciliatory spirit on the part of the Phoenicians. May it last and become stronger!

<sup>1</sup> *Ohio Oil Co. vs. Indiana*, 177 U.S. 209.

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

The Mexican government is trying to get a share of the oil boom. It does this mainly by taxation. There is a 10 per cent tax on production paid to the government; there is also an export tax on oil. Besides, the 1925 oil law requires the payment of a 5 per cent royalty on production to the owner of the surface.

— In 1925, the government received a little over forty-two million pesos as oil tax (42,144,547.63 pesos). About 90 per cent of this sum (38,471,892.34 pesos) was paid by six companies, the Huasteca Petroleum, the Transcontinental, Mexican Eagle, Corona, Mexican Sinclair, and Mexican Gulf.

The total budget of expenditures of the federal government for the present year (1926) is a little over 304 million pesos (304,405,344.44 pesos). The amount paid by the oil companies as taxes last year is 13 per cent of this budget.

— You have doubtless heard the phrase “confiscatory taxes.” For ten years and more the oil companies have claimed that the taxation imposed on them was confiscatory. They have used the phrase so much that I wouldn’t be surprised if by now even they themselves believed it! That these taxes are not excessive is indicated by the fact that higher taxes are levied on oil in the fields of Okla-

## INVESTMENTS AND NATIONALISM

homa and Texas. As a matter of fact the Mexican government in 1920 was getting less income from Mexican oil than the United States government was getting through the income tax from the same oil.<sup>1</sup>

The government is entitled to whatever revenue it is getting from oil. The amount received is large although it is not so great a proportion of the total budget as some people believe. The total amount received from oil taxes from 1901 to date would hardly have covered the total expenditures of the federal government for one year.

Our protective legislation also forbids foreigners to acquire land or waters on a strip one hundred kilometers wide along the frontiers and fifty kilometers wide along the coasts. This is a mere reiteration of old regulations existing in Mexico since the early days of the Colony. But the so-called "Aliens Land Law" goes farther; it orders that no foreigner should acquire or control land for agricultural, mining, or oil purposes, unless he agrees not to ask his home government's protection in matters pertaining to said property. Under no circumstance can a foreigner own 50 per cent or more of the stock of companies for the exploitation of Mexican farming lands.

<sup>1</sup> Carleton Beals, *op. cit.*, p. 240.

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

The legislators have been very careful not to make this law retroactive. Those persons who before the law was passed owned 50 per cent or more of such stock can keep it for life. In the case of corporations, the excess ownership shall be permitted for ten years. "Protective measures," I call those which I have been describing to you. We are trying to protect our farm lands, saving them for the Mexican. We are trying to protect our resources from unprincipled and wasteful exploitation. We are also trying to avoid international meddling with our affairs by having foreigners who want to work in Mexico conform to Mexican law.

The fight with the foreign interests has taught us lessons which we are trying not to forget. But our nationalistic policy has reasons of its own. We have a growing population and we have a population with growing needs. If we are ever going to redeem the peon and to incorporate the Indian we must place them in conditions in which they can make a decent living. That means, largely, giving them land or making land available to them and adopting a certain preferential policy toward the Mexican. Such a policy, strange to say, was not always in operation during the Diaz régime.

You may be wondering what place is left for the foreigner in the scheme of Mexican affairs,

## INVESTMENTS AND NATIONALISM

which I have tried to outline to you, and whether we are contemplating the erection of a new kind of Chinese wall around Mexico. After what I have said about Mexican nationalism you might want to ask whether we intend to do away with internationalism. Of course, we realize that no nation can now live unto herself. We also know that Chinese walls are not permitted nowadays. Furthermore, we realize that international relations, as one of your distinguished secretaries of state once said, "are not built on abstractions but are the result of practical conceptions." International relations, someone has said, are oil relations. They are certainly so in Mexico. Therefore, when we admit the foreigner, we know that he comes for business and even to drive a hard deal. More so, we understand the Phoenician, his motives, and his methods; and yet we want him to come to Mexico especially to teach us his methods. Our people can learn; they are quick to learn. They learned the art of railroading to perfection. We are willing to pay the price. We did pay it in the case of the railroads, but now we are happy because we control them financially and understand them mechanically. Mexico needs development, and nobody realizes that more than we do ourselves. The eternal comparison with American development makes us



## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

even pessimistic sometimes. Mexico needs capital and a dash of foreign enterprise and physical activity. We are a bit slow in Mexico. Ours is not a policy of exclusion. We appreciate the foreigner, we admire his tireless energy. When he does not step too hard on our national toes, we welcome him. We believe that Mexico has natural resources enough for the Mexicans and for many, many foreigners.

Our nationalistic policy is simply trying to correct a misplaced emphasis. We are satisfied no longer with Mexico being mother to the foreigner and stepmother to the native. Our nationalistic policy pretends to meet the foreigner and to be met by the foreigner on a basis of equal terms. Mexico has decided that she will be treated by the other nations as a sovereign state or not at all. There is a strain of divine doggedness and pride in the makeup of the Mexican, the will to be free and to be himself, that no amount of international bulldozing or brute force has ever destroyed or is ever likely to destroy.

The United States has in Mexico a situation, a problem, and an opportunity. The situation is best expressed by the billion and a quarter dollars of American investment. The problem can be envisaged by considering the position of Mexico in the

## INVESTMENTS AND NATIONALISM

Caribbean and the tightening grasp of the so-called American imperialistic policy all around it. Cuba, Colombia, and Panama; Nicaragua, Honduras, Santo Domingo; Haiti, the Virgin Islands—take a look at the map and study recent history. How far and how long can Mexico resist? That is our problem. What will be the net and the ultimate gain to the people of the United States of the policy aptly called by one of its great captains “Dollar Diplomacy”? That is your problem.

The opportunity implies the proper solution of the problem in its twofold aspect: your commercial and political expansion in Latin America and the right kind of development, both spiritual and material, of the Latin republics to the south of you. To my mind, the acceptable solution of the problem necessitates a better kind of policy than “Dollar Diplomacy.” It requires also a different kind of relations from mere diplomatic relations, and other kinds of investments in addition to material investment.

Let the captains of industry keep up their mighty strife. Let them keep up the traffic of material commodities and strike the equilibrium which best suits them. Let them keep up the trading, on condition that they shall not hinder the real human intercourse among the peoples of the earth.



## II

### HUMANISM AND THE MEXICAN LABORER

Last Labor Day, more than 75,000 organized workers paraded in perfect order through the streets of the capital of Mexico. Watching the parade from a little elevation, one was struck by the predominance of the blue color. The men were dressed in blue—they wore the blue overalls known the world over. Like a river, the mighty human stream, clad in blue, surged through the avenue. One could not help remarking that had a parade of this sort been possible in Mexico twenty-five years ago, the color note would have been not blue but white—the white of the calico dress of the peasant. In twenty-five years, Mexico City has changed from white calico dress to overalls, from peasantry to industrialism. The change is more or less evident in all the cities of Mexico.

At the close of the nineteenth century, feudalism was rampant in Mexico. The landlord, the church, and the political boss, were the masters, owners of land and life. Around them, a group of serfs vegetated, born in poverty and dying in

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

poverty. Exceptionally, there was enlightened feudalism. Sometimes one found benevolent feudalism. The rule was, however, feudalism of the worse sort, inhuman and pitiless.

Feudalism we had with all its crimes and none of its virtues. There was no system and no organization. Feudal and all, Mexican society was dislocated. The proletariat was disorganized. While there was slavery, there was no ownership of slaves. The feudal lords enjoyed all the advantages but had none of the responsibilities of the system.

Living conditions at that time were abominable. The usual salary for the country laborer was twenty-five centavos a day, twelve and one-half cents in American currency, plus a small ration of corn and beans.

The picture of country life in Mexico is well known: a very large hacienda with land so much in excess that not all of it could be cultivated; in the center, the house—a medieval castle with turrets, walls, and ramparts; inside the castle, the quarters of the master, to be opened on the rare occasion in which he came to visit his properties, the manager's house, the church, and the store-rooms; outside this castle, the huts of the laborers—dirty, miserable holes where peons, women, children, pigs, and dogs lived in promiscuity; not

## HUMANISM AND THE LABORER

far from the hacienda, an Indian village or rancho which offered no excuse for its existence at all, having no apparent resources since its inhabitants had been deprived of their lands by the *hacendado* and had been left, therefore, to increase the number of dependents in Mexico.

The picture corresponds to Central Mexico. In the north, conditions were and are somewhat different; people were more independent and feudalism less apparent, but nature is also less bountiful so that life is hard and the laborer suffers almost as much as on the central highlands. Along the coastal plains and in the tropical south, again the picture changes somewhat. Life is more independent, and the struggle far easier. The tropical heat has kept the would-be lords away and the common people have had more of a chance to fill their stomachs. An exception has to be made in the case of tropical Yucatan, where a very desirable product, henequen (hemp), brought the big *hacendado* and his feudal system.

The people of the cities were faring no better than their brothers in the country. The wages of unskilled laborers such as masons, carpenters, bakers, etc., in Mexico City, Monterrey, Puebla, and the other state capitals, were in 1910 about thirty-two cents (United States currency) a day. No ra-

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

tion of corn and beans came with this salary, and life was generally more expensive in the cities, so the city workingman was in worse conditions than the farm laborer.

Housing conditions were terrible. In the smaller towns, adobe huts and lean-to's made out of sticks and flattened tin cans were the rule. In larger centers, the slum tenement houses of the worst type were the home of the laborer.

The small salaries were aggravated by the fact that large families are the rule in Mexico. There were always a large number of people depending on thirty cents a day. The thing was a physical impossibility; the result was dislocation of family life—everyone, from the children up, had to shift for himself.

Labor organization was, of course, null. In the more enlightened centers, some Mutualistic Circles were formed. They were associations for purposes of mutual help in case of emergencies. Charity was still the only resort of the proletariat.

There was a general indifference to these conditions—a lonely voice here and there, a social prophet crying in the wilderness; no social consciousness, however. And, as might be expected, there was no protective legislation for the workingman, no minimum wage, no time regulations, no accident

## HUMANISM AND THE LABORER

protection, no child-labor protection, nothing but general indifference.

A prominent surgeon has said that in those days every time he was called to perform a saving operation in one of the charity public hospitals he had the feeling that it was inhuman to bring the person back to life because he knew that it was to bring him back to misery.

These were the conditions under which industrialism was introduced in Mexico in the nineties! The building of the railroads, the incoming of foreign capital, the opening up of the country, and the setting up of large industrial plants enlisted an army of workers recruited mainly from the fields. Ignorant people turned into unskilled laborers. The sudden change from an agrarian, pastoral life into industrialism upset the equilibrium of the masses and precipitated the revolution.

Whatever other elements may have been in ferment in Mexico during the first decade of the twentieth century, it is certain that the labor element was one of the most important. The revolution started in the mining camp of Cananea and in the cotton mills of Orizaba. Once launched, the peasants took it up. The first armies all came from the country.

The first labor organizations were formed under



## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

Madero in 1912. Since then, labor organization has been increasing until now the Mexican Federation of Labor claims a membership of 1,500,000 members.

The organization of the proletariat in Mexico has been one of the most spectacular movements in the history of labor. From no organization at all, practically from non-existence, Mexican labor can now boast of a strong organization, the Mexican Federation of Labor, which works efficiently for the interests of the working classes and effectively controls the greater part of the unions. Labor also points with pride to the Labor party, which succeeded, in 1919, in placing a workingman as governor of the federal district; which counts, now with a cabinet member, the leader of the party—a party which will be, if indeed it is not already, a determining power in Mexican politics.

The report submitted by the secretary of the Mexican Federation of Labor to the seventh convention of the federation, gives the membership statistics as shown below:

Number of members in 1918 (the first year of the Federation) .....	7,000
Membership in 1920.....	50,000
Membership in 1923.....	800,000
Membership in 1925.....	1,500,000

## HUMANISM AND THE LABORER

This tremendous membership of 1,500,000 corresponds to 75 local federations with 2,605 syndicates.

The growth of the federation has been simply phenomenal. I think, however, that the figures as stated in the report are greatly exaggerated. The criterion for judging membership may be very lax. The Department of Labor has a register of labor organizations affiliated with the Mexican Federation of Labor which gives only 1,063 as the number of associations and syndicates, with a total membership of only 141,044. One can take one's choice between two figures, 1,500,000 or 141,000; and one will have to admit in either case that the growth of the labor organizations of Mexico has been tremendous.

Not all the unions are affiliated with the Mexican Federation of Labor, the C.R.O.M.<sup>1</sup> The railroad unions are independent; so are the Reds, a group of labor organizations which are more radical than the C.R.O.M. The C.R.O.M. is by far the largest and strongest organization and the one that represents the bulk of the labor movement. While the C.R.O.M. is a national organization, its influence is, at present, limited to the federal district, to most of the state capitals, and to the most im-

<sup>1</sup> Confederacion Regional Obrera Mexicana.

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

portant industrial or agricultural fields, such as the oil fields, the hemp regions of Yucatan and Tamaulipas, and the cotton region of Torreon. The sphere of the C.R.O.M. is mostly with the industrial worker. For evident reasons, the farmers and peasants are very difficult to organize. Furthermore, the two political parties, the Labor and the Agrarian, are opposed to each other. This opposition has been transferred to the factory or city laborer and to the peasant.

The labor organizations have not only increased in numbers but in wisdom. It was Mr. Gompers, I think, who made the statement that no labor movement in any country had been able to strike an equilibrium as quickly as in Mexico. Getting a bad start, such as Mexican labor certainly got, with the sudden inrush of industrialism which found it unprepared, and embarking from the very beginning upon the tempestuous sea of armed revolution, it is indeed a wonder, and one highly to its credit, that the Mexican proletariat has, apparently at least, come to port.

The general policy of the labor movement toward the Mexican government is embodied in the following principles:

1. The program of a Mexican labor organization cannot be more radical than its organized

## HUMANISM AND THE LABORER

strength if that organization is to wield a practical influence.

2. The labor aims must be cautiously expressed in order not to contribute to American intervention propaganda. A proletarian revolution would precipitate intervention immediately.

3. Good relations must be maintained with the government in power, if possible, owing to the traditional character of Mexican political practices which would result in the prompt suppression of an organized movement as yet too weak to resist official persecution. Latin political practices guarantee tangible advantages for such good relationships.

The relations of the Mexican Federation of Labor with the government are indeed cordial—the *trait-d'union* has been made by the Labor party. Some people fail to see any difference between the Labor party and the C.R.O.M.; they insist that it is one and the same thing. It is certain that the leaders of the Labor party and the leaders of the C.R.O.M. are the same people.

Again some malicious people say that the Labor party runs the government; and therefore, they say, why should the C.R.O.M., which is the Labor party, have any difficulties with the government? Of course, the Labor party has one member in the

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

cabinet of President Calles, Mr. Morones, Secretary of Labor. He is a strong man and a very influential one. But this is not saying, by any means, that the Labor party is running the government. In the cabinet there are other strong men who do not belong to the Labor party. The truth of the matter is that the present administration, and the previous one for that matter, have openly stood for the working class and have encouraged the labor organizations. In Mexico as in all of Latin America, the government has to grant aid to many more movements and organizations than the government of this country. We are much more dependent on the government. When the labor leaders stated that "latin political practices guarantee tangible advantages for good relationships" with the governments, they were stating a well-known truth. The government of Mexico, therefore, being interested in the formation of a strong and enlightened proletariat, has encouraged and is encouraging the labor movement.

It is regrettable that the labor organizations should have taken such a prominent political participation in Mexico. The time will come, I think, when they will see the wisdom of making a clearer distinction between politics and laborism. For the present, I am of the opinion that only through their

## HUMANISM AND THE LABORER

political activities could they have arrived so quickly at the advantageous position they now have.

On the other hand, the fear has often been expressed that the labor people, especially on account of their political proclivities, are likely to cause a great deal of trouble in Mexico. Of this I have no doubt. Politicians cause trouble everywhere. Labor politicians will be no exception. Apart from this, I have little fear of the labor element ever becoming a factor of disorder in the public life of Mexico. I am not being cynical when I say that Mexican society is too dislocated already to be seriously affected by a new dislocation. What I mean is that the very fact of our social disorganization can be a check for social disorder of a predominant type. We could not submit to the tyranny of labor. Furthermore, the concept of power vested in a central government is too ingrained into our national consciousness to allow bolshevik rule.

The point I have tried to make is that of relieving the proletariat of the charge that they have sold their soul to the government in power, and of relieving the government of the accusation that it has delivered itself, soul and body, to the proletariat.

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

In a statement given out to the press not long ago, President Calles referred to the fact that organized labor had been of late showing a more conciliatory spirit and much less violence in its dealings with capital. His explanation for this was that the workingmen were realizing that they had power already, that they were strong. Having strength, and realizing that capital knew they had strength, they did not feel the need of showing off quite so often as previously. On the other hand, he intimated that capital had already entered into a state of resignation. Employers realize that organized labor is with us and is with us to stay and that they might just as well make the best of it.

Statistics on strikes illustrate the growing tranquillity of the working class. According to the data of the Department of Labor, during 1922 there were 199 strikes; in 1923 the number was 184; in 1924 there were 116; while in 1925 only 84 are recorded. The strikes of 1922 affected, in round numbers, 71,000 workers. The following year, 132,000 participated in strikes. In 1924 and 1925 the numbers of strikers were 28,000 and 9,000, respectively. The reported losses to the employers were, in round numbers, 4,000,000 in 1922, 3,000,000 in 1923, 3,000,000 in 1924, and one-third of a million last year. (It must be said, however, that

## HUMANISM AND THE LABORER

this number does not include the losses suffered by the companies in the two most important strikes of the year, that against the Huasteca Petroleum Company and that of the Street Car, Light and Power Company of Mexico City. There are no data on these strikes.) The losses sustained by the employees for wages not paid them are also given: 1,250,000 in 1922, 1,500,000 in 1923, the same for 1924, and only about 200,000 pesos for last year.

Aside from the two big strikes, one against the strongest oil company operating at present in Mexico and the other against the street car company in Mexico City, the year of 1925 was a year of relative quiteness. The calm has continued into this year, there having been no other important strikes except the one against a shoe company, which has not yet been settled.

This growing condition of satisfaction of the working classes could not have been possible were it not for the fact that the 1917 Constitution, as well as the spirit of all related Mexican legislation since the Revolution, has protected the workingman in a very definite way. Article 123 of the Constitution has the following provisions: the eight-hour day for adults and the six-hour day for young people between the ages of twelve and sixteen



## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

years; one day of rest each week; protection to women workers; accident protection and indemnity; a salary compatible with the satisfaction of reasonable needs; the right to unionize; the right to strike; three months pay in case of discharge, except when discharge is for cause; conciliation and arbitration in case of disputes.

One recognized weakness of Article 123 is that it leaves to the different states the right to codify those fractions of it which require codification. The contention is that such reglementation made by the different states has introduced and will further introduce variations in procedure and interpretations which will make the handling of labor questions very complicated. On the other hand, the employers have found the provision requiring the payment of three months salary on discharge particularly trying.

On the whole, Article 123, as well as the famous article 27, has received the sanction of the nation which is more than willing to give the working class adequate protection and to let them exercise their lawful rights.

Social organization has not been limited to the shop-worker. The peasants are slowly coming together. They are at present in the merely political stage and, unfortunately, are being the victims of

## HUMANISM AND THE LABORER

the machinations of the political boss. The Agrarian party is the name of the political faction which is running them. This group, like almost all of our so-called political parties, is no more than a congressional block. Their influence goes no farther than electing a few men to Congress. The social platform which the leaders of the Agrarian party are putting before the peasant has mainly to do with the restitution to the villages of their communal lands and the donation of new land to those communities which do not have any. This program of course is not the exclusive property of the Agrarian party. As everybody knows, all revolutionary governments have included the solution of the agrarian problem in their programs of social reform.

Besides the organization which the leaders of the Agrarian party are giving the peasant for purely political ends, the C.R.O.M. is also trying to bring about some organization of the country laborer. The most constructive policy, however, is not coming from either of these two bodies but from the government itself. This policy consists in the stimulation of the co-operative spirit among the farmers, in the creation of the Farmer's Bank, in the opening up of the farming districts by roads, in the execution of irrigation projects which will

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

augment the tillable land in Mexico by the million acres, and, of course, in the restitution and donation of lands. By the end of 1925, 1,279 villages had been given lands or had their lands restored to them.

Organizations of the so-called intellectual and clerical proletariat have been the cause for much talk among government clerks and teachers at certain times. Very little or nothing has actually been done. Some teachers of the state of Puebla are affiliated with the C.R.O.M. There is also a syndicate of students. There is one of clerks in government offices. They are all isolated cases which do not point to a tendency.

There is, however, a sense of approachment between the working classes and the so-called intellectual classes. For a while it was the fashion for a young lawyer to be seen frequently at labor meetings. The truth of the matter is that the professional groups—teachers, lawyers, doctors, and engineers—are coming to realize the need of organization and are slowly developing a sense of social solidarity which naturally brings them closer together and at the same time closer to other social groups.

The situation of women is also significant. The blue parade to which I referred at the beginning

## HUMANISM AND THE LABORER

of my talk, might, in spots, have been described as a red and black parade. All the working-women organizations were represented by delegates dressed in red and black. Women seem to have a finer sense of social responsibility than men, and, therefore, it is not strange to see women's organizations in Mexico, even in these days of their small beginnings, strike at once on the path of social reform and social uplift. Generous souls that they are, they have not been so loud as their brothers in crying for their own rights or in denouncing their own wrongs; rather, they have seen the need of the social group as a whole and the social evil in its entirety and valiantly have started on that noble crusade for social betterment for which women's organizations have enlisted the world over.

I have attempted to describe to you the pattern of the social organization of the working class in Mexico at the present time. I have tried to present it to you in contrast with conditions at the close of the nineteenth century. It is only fair to carry comparison still farther and to try to answer the oft-repeated question: Have conditions really improved? Is the laborer better off today than fifteen years ago?

The change of dress from white calico to blue overalls should also include the changing of the

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

sandal for shoes and the substitution of the straw sombrero for a regular hat, or more frequently for a sort of miner's cap. The change is evident in Mexico City and in all the large state capitals, much less evident in less important centers, and absent altogether in the real rural communities. It unmistakably points to better economic conditions and to a higher standard of living.

Wages have advanced: a carpenter or a mason receives between three and four pesos a day; a shop worker gets from four to five pesos; a peon in Mexico City, one peso and a half. In the smaller cities these wages are about one-half of those received in Mexico City. The farm hand or peon gets from seventy-five cents to three pesos, according to the locality. One peso is perhaps the average. All these wages are three or four times as large as they were in 1910. This is surely an improvement. The advantage gained is not as great as it would appear, when we consider that the cost of living has increased likewise. The truth is that while there has been a decided betterment in salaries, what the average workingman is now receiving is not sufficient to meet the most elementary needs of civilized man.

Thus far, the workingmen, seeing their need and the justice of their demand for betterment, have

## HUMANISM AND THE LABORER

resorted to the method of forcing their employers to raise salaries. The time is coming when the laborer must realize that he has to increase his earning capacity in order to further increase his pay. Mexican labor is still very largely unskilled labor.

The workingman, having a sense of security and of strength, is taking a more dignified participation in life than was the case in 1910. Amusement and relaxation are possible not only on the condition of a balanced budget but also on that of a balanced mental attitude. Fifteen years ago, the beautiful park of Chapultepec was the privilege of the social élite—its lawns and meadows were never trampled by the feet of weary people. Through its shaded avenues the carriages of the rich would roll by in stately majesty, exhibiting their wares of fat and brainless and always gaudy aristocracy. To-day, Chapultepec is democratic. On Sundays, thousands and thousands of people—so many of them in overalls—play on the grass, eat their lunches under the trees, and read the paper. The fashionable promenade is no more. And not only in the parks but in vacant lots everywhere one sees the working people at play, relaxing, happy. This is perhaps the best sign that life for the proletariat is being a little kinder. Under its caresses we

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

may yet bring the serf back to the state of manhood.

The housing conditions have improved. The realtor has got busy in Mexico. Land has been fractioned into lots to such an extent that the experts tell us that Mexico City is oversubdivided and overbuilt. To the south and east of Mexico City the workingmen have gone to establish their "colonies." They are all building their little homes. The aspect of these poorer colonies is very much like that of the poorer negro quarters in southern cities. Conditions are unsanitary. And yet this represents a marked improvement over the tenement houses of old Mexico. Here, in their new "colony," they at least have fresh air and sunshine; and, above all, it is their own home. These people are now property-owners; they are on the road to citizenship.

The picture I have tried to present will give you, I hope, the right perspective from which to judge the social problem in Mexico. We have been called bolsheviks, Reds, socialists! It would be far nearer the truth to be simply called humanists. Our problems are elementary, they strike to the fundamental bases of life. Our aims are the satisfaction of the most elementary needs. Rabid Reds we have been called for giving the workingmen a

## HUMANISM AND THE LABORER

charter of rights which long ago had been given to laborers in this country and in all the European countries.

Mexico is struggling for organization. Social organization is the great need. There is no country in which society is more maladjusted and dislocated than in Mexico. Organized labor should be welcome in Mexico, if for no other reason than for the reason that it is organized and that it represents a disciplinary factor in Mexican life.





### III

## INTEGRATING MEXICO THROUGH EDUCATION

Mexico is a country of many races, many climates, and many opinions. It is, likewise, a land of castes and social orders.

In the House of the Indian Student, at Mexico City, the visitor may see pure Indians of many types speaking their own dialects and representing different stages of civilization and very different traits, both physical and mental. And yet the 160 young men there assembled belong to 23 different Indian races, represent only a fraction of the pure Indian race groups in Mexico.

Besides the pure Indian, there is the mestizo with varying proportions of Indian blood, the whites, and the near whites. Of Mexico's 14,000,000 inhabitants, 2,000,000 are said to be pure Indian, 8,000,000 are mestizos with a strong proportion of Indian blood, and the rest are whites or near whites.

Mexico is a land of great geographical variations: torrid heat in the south and on the coasts; deserts in the north; temperate climate in the

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

central plateau; perennial snows on the mountain peaks and untrodden tropical jungles in the valleys; deficiency of rainfall in some regions and overabundance of water in some others.

A group of prominent American business men were touring the country as guests of President Obregon. They were passing through the waste, desert-like country of the north. "We are impressed," said one of them to the President, "with the vastness of your country. Mexico is a land of distances." "No," the president replied with a twinkle in his eye, "the trouble is with our trains; they are so slow!" Both the president and his guest were right. Mexico is a land of great distances and of poor communications. Despite our thirteen thousand miles of railroads—which, by the way, are about as fast and as efficient as your own—a school inspector may have to travel two weeks on horseback to reach a certain school within his district. It is easier and quicker to go from San Francisco to New York than to go from Mexico City to Hermosillo, the capital of the state of Sonora. The capital of the state of Chiapas is reached only after two days on train and four days on horseback. It is easier for the Yucatecan to come to New York than to go to Mexico City.

Great distances and slow communications make

## INTEGRATION THROUGH EDUCATION

it very difficult to mobilize public opinion. And even if newspapers could travel quickly and there were enough of them, six out of every ten people could not read them, because they do not know how to read. The formation of public opinion on any matter whatsoever is a slow process with us. With you, in the United States, news travels and opinions are transmitted. With us, in Mexico, rumors ferment and opinions explode.

The great diversity of race groups; the inferiority complex of the Indian face to face with the European; the isolation of the people, isolation both material and spiritual; and whatever sense of individuality may be attributed to the Mexican due to the fact that he is partly Latin—all these factors work for the creation of a strong individualism, for the atomizing of group consciousness, and are, in a word, forces that hinder the process of national integration.

Mexico has been called a Catholic nation. If by this is meant that the Roman Catholic church is the dominant church in my country the statement is true. From the top of the pyramid of Cholula, a flourishing capital and sacred city of the Indians when the Spaniards came, one can count today, by merely looking over the surrounding valley, over two hundred churches. An Indian population

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

dwells in this valley, not over thirty thousand people, I should say. One can actually see churches where no houses are to be seen.

During colonial days too many churches were built in Mexico, forty-five hundred being built in a period of two hundred years. Labor was costless, materials cheap; and, at any rate, the Indian was made to pay for the stones and to put them into place as well. The church once built, the priest had an income for life. Church-making was a very profitable business for the clergy.

Mexico, especially Central Mexico, is pretty well covered with Catholic church buildings, and the Indians have been trained to support these churches. In this material sense Mexico may be said to be Roman Catholic.

In the Indian there is, however, no clear conception of Christianity such as European peasants might have. Due to this fact and to the fact that the political action of the Catholic church in Mexico has brought upon it the antagonism of the government and liberal groups since 1850, religion in my country can mean no unifying influence, no binding together of purpose, no spiritual kinship. The religious situation in Mexico is working against social unification rather than for it.

The picture which I have sketched for you, a

## INTEGRATION THROUGH EDUCATION

picture of a nationality in dissociation in the atomic state is true to life. Let no person think, however, that it is a picture of the whole of Mexican life. There is another aspect of Mexico. It is the Mexico stubborn in its Mexicanism, proud and persisting. It is the Mexico that will not be assimilated. It is the Mexico that fought eleven years for independence, that resisted France until France was tired of the fight, and then kept on until the ill-fated emperor she had sent us was caught and shot. It is the Mexico that tried to be individual during the Great War, when every nation was taking sides. It is the Mexico that separated the state from the church before any other Latin country had done it. It is the Mexico that for sixteen years has been attempting to be Mexican and to be for the Mexicans. This kind of national stubbornness, let us call it so, cannot be explained in terms of the atomic state of nationalism. There must doubtless be other aspects of Mexican life to account for that; and there are.

We have a common language: Spanish. It would be more exact to say, perhaps, that we have a common language aspiration. There is ignorance of Spanish in some dark corners of Mexico; there is nowhere resistance to Spanish or lack of desire to acquire it, quite the contrary. We are a country

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

with a past and a tradition. We have emotional and cultural patterns of our own in which to weave a civilization.

From deep sources and common origins spring integrating traits of the Mexican nationality—a folk-lore tradition; an undeniable artistic temperament, refined and modernized by the Spanish crossing; the will to persist racially; a sense of racial fate; and an ever present sense of racial pride.

These are, then, the two sides of the picture: Mexico heterogeneous, unassociated; and a unified Mexico, a Mexico with a strong personal profile. I realize of course that these two contradictory tendencies—one for integration, the other for dissociation—exist to a certain extent in every nation. The important thing in each case is to find which one of the two tendencies predominates, which one has the upper hand or is on the ascendancy.

Education helps integration by making people like-minded. In Mexico we are consciously striving to bring about national unity by means of the school. In a sense, the fundamental difference between the educational program of President Calles and the same program of the Diaz régime is that now we are thinking in national terms while twenty years ago they thought only in terms of the City of Mexico.

## INTEGRATION THROUGH EDUCATION

Our educational program is devised for Mexico as a whole. We no longer see only the immediate need; we are compelled to think of the need of Mexico. We cannot plan for fine schools for the capitals, calculated to dazzle the foreign visitor; we have to think of the 1,500,000 children without schools to go to, simply because they happen to live in the remote country districts or in backward states. A few facts will make our program clear to you.

Mexico has, in round numbers, 14,000,000 inhabitants. Of these 2,750,000 are children of school age. Approximately only four out of every ten Mexican children are going to a public school in Mexico at large. School attendance is compulsory up to twelve years of age or through the fourth grade. But school attendance cannot be actually enforced for the simple reason that there are no schools for the children to go to. A study of the distribution of schools and population clearly shows that there is a scarcity of schools out in the country. Our cities and small towns haven't a sufficient number of schools, but many of the rural districts simply have no schools at all.

Sixty-two per cent of the total population of Mexico is illiterate. The variation of illiteracy in the different states of the republic runs from 35 per



## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

cent in some of the northern states (Tamaulipas and Sonora) to 88 per cent in the state of Oaxaca. The average per cent of illiteracy, for the country is, as stated above, 62.

Mexico, like the United States, has a federal republican organization. There are twenty-eight states in Mexico. The seat of the federal government is in the federal district, which includes and surrounds Mexico City. There are, besides; three federal territories. The budget of expenditures of all the twenty-eight states, for the year of 1925, was, in round numbers, 50,000,000 pesos (approximately \$25,000,000).

Out of the 50,000,000 pesos spent by the states for all purposes, almost 20,000,000 were spent for education; so the average expenditure for education was 40 per cent of the total budget. There was one state devoting only 10 per cent of its budget to education, while two states (Sonora and Chihuahua) gave as much as 52 per cent. Out of the 304,500,000 pesos which the federal government is spending this year of 1926, 26,000,000 or  $8\frac{1}{2}$  per cent are being used for educational purposes. Counting what was spent for education both by the states and by the federal government, we have a total of 46,000,000 pesos. In 1910, the banner year of the Diaz administration, the culmination of

## INTEGRATION THROUGH EDUCATION

thirty years of peace and prosperity, the federal government spent in all for education 7,000,000 pesos, which was only  $6\frac{3}{4}$  per cent of the total budget. President Calles, in this year of financial depression, is using four times as much money for schools as Diaz.

Let us review our data:

Sixty-two per cent of the population (over 8,000,000 people) are illiterates.

Nearly 2,750,000 children need to be sent to school.

Nearly 1,750,000 of these are without a school to go to.

State governments on the average are using 40 per cent of their budgets for schools.

Federal government is spending as much for education as is possible at present, when one considers that education, while important, is not the only obligation the federal government has.

These figures outline our problem. We are trying to face it bravely, but sometimes, in spite of ourselves, a pessimistic feeling of impossibility creeps over us. We have no right to be pessimistic, however. More is being done for education in the country than was done before. Besides, there are certain aspects of our present enterprise which are decidedly worthy.

Public education in Mexico is carried on by the federal government, by the state governments, and in some cases by the municipal authorities. We

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

have, then, a triple system of schools. Each state is autonomous in regard to its educational system and may carry on its program from the kindergarten to the university. Within the state, the municipalities may, in turn, have charge of their respective school districts. The responsibility of the municipal counties is only economic, however. The state government dictates the educational policies for all the counties and exercises the proper supervision. In very few states, however, have the counties been able to finance their schools. The result of this economic incapacity is that the states either have to grant special aid to the counties or have had to take charge of the schools at large.

The federal government has charge of the schools in the federal district and in the territories and can also establish schools in any part of Mexico. As a matter of fact, the central government started its nation-wide program of schools in 1920, and today, after six years, maintains, outside of the federal district and territories, more than 3,000 schools with a total enrolment of over 250,000. The federal government has a National Department of Education, with a Secretary of Education (a member of the Cabinet) at its head.

The two school systems, the federal and that of the states, function independently of each other,

## INTEGRATION THROUGH EDUCATION

but with close co-ordination, thus avoiding duplication of work and lessening of local responsibility. Inasmuch as the state and municipal authorities have, for some years past, established most of their schools in the cities and towns, the National Department of Education has established the federal schools mostly in the small rural communities, in the villages and farms. Of the 3,155 federal schools in the states, 2,721 are rural schools. Thus by going out to the country with the federal schools we are covering a difficult and neglected field and avoiding friction with the local authorities.

Our Department of Education has also established in the capital city of each state a sort of model school. We call it a "standard" elementary school. These standard schools serve as demonstration centers of the new policies in education. They are the exponents of the educational tendencies of the department and through them we are slowly bringing about a vitalization of the elementary school in all parts of Mexico. The federal government maintains also throughout the country some normal schools for the training of rural teachers and a number of vocational schools.

There is no organic relation between the two school systems, that of the different states and that under the federal government, but they co-exist

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

without conflicts. The policy of the central government in general is to supplement the action of the local governments without relieving them of responsibility. The field is so large and the need so urgent that up to the present there has been no overlapping and no jealousy. How far the federal government can continue establishing schools without arousing opposition from the states or without lessening local responsibility, is, of course, a question. But as long as two-thirds of the children in Mexico have no public schools to go to, there should be very little danger of a clash between the two systems.

In describing some of the features of the educational work done by the federal government, as I intend to do presently, I beg you to keep in mind that federal government education is not the only one in operation in Mexico. Lest you forget this fact, let me again impose on you by giving some comparative data:

In 1925, the 28 states had 4,635 rural schools.

The federal government has 2,721 rural schools this year.

There are 4,208 elementary schools in the states.

The central government this year has 693 schools of this type.

The total enrolment in state schools in 1925 was 682,916.

In the federal schools the enrolment in 1926 is 366,605.

The total number of public rural schools in Mexico is 7,356.

## INTEGRATION THROUGH EDUCATION

The total number of elementary schools is 4,901.

The enrolment in all rural and elementary schools, both state and federal, is 1,049,521.

The percentage of children of school age in public schools is 39.57.

Besides the public schools we have in Mexico, as in any other country, the private schools. I have no figures as to the numbers and enrolment. A mere guess might place their number as about one-fifth that of the public schools.

Now that we are through with the presentation of figures, let me tell you that I have a very poor opinion of the value of statistics as such. To my mind, tendencies are far more important than mere figures. The spirit that permeates a movement is more significant than the accomplished facts. This talk on education in Mexico would be a barren exercise indeed if I did not attempt to give you an insight into the spirit of our work.

I should like to present to your minds' eye the picture of a typical rural school of one of those 2,721 rural schools that the Department of Education is establishing all over the country and of which President Calles wants to see 6,000 functioning by the end of his term. This is the school: One teacher; about forty children, both boys and girls, their ages running from seven to fourteen

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

years; the schoolhouse, consisting of only one room perhaps, with a wide porch in front; the school yard, plenty of ground around the school; a school garden. Oh, I don't want to mislead you with these terms. We have all that, the garden and the orchard and the house; but do not think of your standard American schoolhouses; do not think even of your traditional little red schoolhouse. Ours are more primitive, more informal, more naïve.

There is the most informal atmosphere about this little school. Work is individual although there are plenty of group activities. The children read and write wonderfully well, and they all sing—how they love to sing! Indian blood is everywhere apparent. Spanish is the language used. Perhaps the children speak it brokenly and maybe if their parents came they would address them only in their native dialect, but the official tongue is Spanish, and the children love it, and the parents are delighted to see them learn it.

These children read and write and do some number work; they sing and draw and paint; the girls sew and embroider—all these things we are accustomed to see school children do. But in this school the pupils keep chickens and rabbits. They also have a pig or two. Their flower garden is a

## INTEGRATION THROUGH EDUCATION

spot of beauty—the children have worked so hard on it. They have watered it every day with water they themselves had to draw from the open well near by. The children have their orchard; they keep bees; they have planted the mulberry tree and are starting a silkworm colony. They are so busy and so happy, these children in the rural school!

When the supervisor comes to visit the school he is very anxious to find out certain things which he has to report to Mexico City. These are some of the questions he asks:

How many children have a fluent knowledge of Spanish?

How many can read and write fluently?

Does the school have a Mexican flag?

Do the children know about Mexico?

Do they know the name of our president?

The names of what great Mexican men do they know?

Do the children keep chickens, pigs, bees, silkworms?

Do they have a garden?

Is there water in the school?

Do they use it?

Is the school socialized? To what extent?

Do they have a parents' association?

Is the teacher engaged in some form of social work outside of the school?

You get the idea back of this investigation. We are not interested in school routine, especially; traditional questions of method and of technique are of secondary importance; but we are tre-



## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

mendously interesting in having a vital school and in having a school that will contribute toward social organization and national unity. It is a far cry from the old three-R school to this rural school of the mountains of Mexico. A far cry indeed from the narrow, restricted life of the traditional school to this natural, real community of children and teacher, where to raise a chicken is as important an enterprise as to learn a poem.

Our little school is the center of interest of the village. Next to the church, the school building is by far the best of the place. There is a school committee formed by half a dozen "prominent citizens"—poor, simple souls, intensely interested in having their children get an education that was not their lot to get themselves. There is a tiny library in this school, just a five-foot shelf perhaps, but something for the people of the village to read under the stimulus of the teacher.

In the evening the young people come to get their share of schooling. Practically every one of our rural schools holds a night session for the adults. Toward evening they come, and as in this typical school we are visiting there is no installation for artificial light, each person brings his own light, a little candle, and setting it up by his desk, begins earnestly to study his lesson.

## INTEGRATION THROUGH EDUCATION

The rural teacher leads a busy life. Teaching three R's would be child's play compared with what this teacher has to do in this little rural school of ours. The teacher is supposed to work six hours daily, four during the day with the children and two in the evening with adults. But the children have the habit of coming early in the morning and going late in the evening. Have they not their garden and their chickens and pigs and bees and silkworms? Have they not their weaving and hammering, their painting and embroidering? Four hours, nay ten hours is hardly enough.

But minding the children and their elder brothers in school is not all of it. This teacher opens the little rural library connected with the school; she fills out question forms for the people and sends them to Mexico City for answer by our library department; she vaccinates the people and gives them whatever medical advice she can. Did you ever hear of the school being the center of the community and the teacher being a real social worker? Did you ever hear of a socialized school? Well, I have heard about those things too. I have heard wise university professors expound the technique of socialization. Let me assure you, that nowhere have I seen better examples of a socialized school than in some of these rural schools

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

of Mexico—in these schools where conditions are natural, the work personally interesting, the activities real, and where there is a spirit of give-and-take, of sharing, and a community of interest.

I have presented you a true picture of our rural schools. Let no one suppose however that all rural schools in Mexico conform to this description; unfortunately, it is not so. But I can assure you that very many of our country schools are trying to live up to this type. This is, then, the tendency.

And what, we might ask ourselves, is the meaning of all this? What is the meaning of this delight in Spanish, what the importance of the bees and the chickens, of the flowers and the weaving, of the dancing and the singing? Why all this questioning about the Mexican flag and Mexican heroes?

The importance of it all is that through our little rural school we are trying to integrate Mexico and to create in our peasant classes a rural spirit. To integrate Mexico. To bring into the fold of the Mexican family the two million Indians; to make them think and feel in Spanish. To incorporate them into that type of civilization which constitutes the Mexican nationality. To bring them into that community of ideas and emotions which is Mexico. To integrate the Indians without sacrifice. Our Indian has many faults, but he has, like-

## INTEGRATION THROUGH EDUCATION

wise, many virtues—a wonderful patience and quietness; miraculous endurance, both physical and mental; artistic temperament, a soul artistic in its very essence. (Oh, the music and the dancing and the painting and the weaving of the Indian—his love of form and his instinct for color!) And our Indian has a background of a civilization so high and delicate that at times, visiting their ancient cities or beholding their marvelous ruins, one wonders if after all the coming of the white man to Mexico was not a pity rather than a blessing.

To integrate Mexico through the rural school—that is to teach the people of the mountains and of the far-away valleys, the million of people that are Mexicans but are not yet Mexican, to teach them the love of Mexico and the meaning of Mexico. To give them a flag—so many of these villages have never seen a Mexican flag, so many have not heard the name of the president. Our little rural school stands for Mexico and represents Mexico in those far-off corners—so many of them yet that belong to Mexico but are not yet Mexican. Our rural school aims to form the rural spirit in Mexico. Mexico is a land of absentee land-owners. Agrarian legislation and the new program of agrarian development are gradually doing away with this condition. But Mexico was and largely is yet a

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

land of peons, not of peasants. To make a peasant of the peon is the aim of our rural school. Other schools may make a farmer out of the peasant. With this latter transformation we are not at present particularly concerned in the Department of Education. But with instilling into our people the love of the land, with making them love the country in preference to the city, and with giving them an intelligent insight into country life—with all this, which amounts to creating the rural spirit, we are tremendously concerned.

But why, you may ask, why are you counting on the rural school—your pitiful, little, destitute rural school—to bring about so great a transformation? The answer is clear: because, in the first place, these rural schools of ours are new, they have no past, they are not fettered by tradition. They are the children of the Revolution, these schools, with a fine contempt for educational dogma and with an unlimited faith in themselves. Since we had to improvise teachers, buildings, furniture, everything material, it was natural enough that we should have felt free to adopt any method or any philosophy that might suit us. In the second place, these schools are scattered over the whole country. Take a look at the map of Mexico. See the thousand of black squares spread from coast to coast

## INTEGRATION THROUGH EDUCATION

and from frontier to frontier. They are all rural schools—nearly three thousand of them. Last year they were two thousand, this year of 1926 we have one thousand more, and in 1927 we shall go up to five thousand. Three-thousand schools, three thousand teachers—that is, three thousand men and women trained to realize an ideal. Three thousand missionaries preaching the gospel of Mexico and the gospel of the rural life and of a social service.

The rural school forms a very important part of our program of education, but, of course, it is not the only part. I beg to remind you of what I said at the beginning about the federal system of schools in general. Besides the rural school we have in the capital of each state a standard elementary school and in many of the towns and small cities elementary schools of the usual type.

In connection with the elementary schools I will simply present to you two aspects which show two significant tendencies in our educational work. Mexico City has a population of 750,000 people. Like any other large city, it has its congested districts and its slums. Mexico City has not enough school buildings. During the first ten years of the Revolution the building of new schools was stopped. Six years ago we resumed building but have not yet been able to catch up. Mr. Vascon-

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

celos, Secretary of Education under President Obregon, is responsible for the building of some of the finest schoolhouses one could find anywhere. But in spite of all, we found ourselves at the beginning of this year with some six thousand children for whom no accommodation could be found in a school. Very naturally too, these six thousand children were the poorest, the most destitute, and the most in need of the influence of the school. This was one side of our problem. The other difficulty was the shortness of time and the lack of money. There was still a third aspect to the problem. These six thousand children were creatures of the slums. They needed education but they also needed food, soap and water, play and a place in which to stay as long as possible away from their miserable homes. You see our problem then: thousands of children right in the city of Mexico for whom we had to provide not merely a school but a whole education; and, then—the tragedy of it!—little money and a short time limit—above all, little money.

This has been the answer to the situation: In four months we have built five open-air schools in which we are housing almost 2,500 children. The cost of each building, not counting the land which we had or was given to us, is approximately \$20,-

## INTEGRATION THROUGH EDUCATION

ooo. The structure is light but substantial, and the cost had been reduced to a minimum. Each school has a garden, shower baths, and playground. A light lunch is given to the children. The rooms have an uncovered front and wide porches. There is room for chickens and rabbits; one of the schools has a stable for two cows. Nature gave us sunshine and an unrivaled climate. The children work and play—or perhaps it would be better to say that they only play, they are so happy in their work. In the center of the patio, high above the children and the flowers, a Mexican flag waves in the air—the green, the white and the red—green for hope, white for purity, and red for race!

“So much literature about five little schools?” you might say. They are five little schools, it is true, but they are five schools with a tendency, and that tendency happens to be tremendously important for us. From the shower bath to the flag, everything is significant in these schools of the slums. Designed to meet an emergency, they are creating a type. The mere fact of their having been built at all shows an ethical attitude toward the poorest of the poor and a sense of democratic justice. And then, there is more “new education” in those open-air schools of Mexico City than in many a fancy school of pedagogical theorists.



## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

The other aspect of elementary education in Mexico that I want to point out to you has to do with the method and the philosophy of it. Thirty years ago, your great philosopher and teacher John Dewey was giving in this very University a series of lectures describing to the parents the educational policies followed by him in the Experimental School closely connected with the University of Chicago. Those talks of his are now known to educators in all nations of the world, they are contained in a little book called *School and Society*.

John Dewey has gone to Mexico. He was first carried there by his pupils at Columbia; he went later in his books—*School and Society* is a book we know and love in Mexico. And now he is going there personally. When John Dewey gets to Mexico, he will find his ideas at work in our schools. Motivation, respect for personality, self-expression, vitalization of school work, project method, learning by doing, democracy in education—all of Dewey is there. Not, indeed, as an accomplished fact, but certainly as a poignant tendency. (May I repeat that tendencies are more significant than facts!)

But of course, we in Mexico, cannot take anything quietly, not even a philosophy of education. So, it has come about that there is a pedagogical

## INTEGRATION THROUGH EDUCATION

war going on in Mexico nowadays. On one side, the standpats, the conservatives, the reactionaries. (This word "reactionary" with us, is like "bol-shevik" with you, a very convenient tag for someone we don't like.) On the other side, stand the advanced, the liberals, the friends of the new education. The old one is the "traditional" school, the new one is the "school of action." Dr. Dewey, unsuspectingly, has led us into all this. Dr. Dewey is going to have an interesting time in Mexico, I am sure, watching his philosophy in the field of battle.

There is still another military aspect to this educational reform. About four years ago, out of a clear sky, a bulletin came forth from the Department of Education ordering all teachers in federal public schools to adopt the project method, to leave behind the old-fashioned ways, and to become modern. Comical almost, you might say. Dr. Dewey, if he learns of this new method of reform, will think it queer, perhaps; I myself made fun of it at the beginning. But let me confess that it has not turned out so badly after all. The teachers were forced to study, the supervisors were obliged to look up the new method, the normal schools took notice. At present the reform for functional education is doing nicely. The federal elementary schools are, in general, working toward

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

the new education. Our federal schools throughout the country are presenting the new type to the state schools and are slowly bringing about the reform everywhere.

I cannot resist the temptation to tell you a little about how we are training our rural teachers in service. Most of the teachers now serving the rural schools have deficient training. The work and responsibility we are placing on them is considerable. In planning the program of rural-teacher training in service, we have tried to keep in mind the following principles. First, training must be specific and intense; second, the teacher should receive training in the technique of socialization both of the school and of the community.

In order to accomplish this, we have organized groups of specialists to go to the field and to hold teachers' institutes right in the community where the teachers are working. Each group is composed of an educator, an expert in rural education; a social worker (nurse, by preference); an expert in agriculture; an expert in home industries; and a teacher of physical education. The group is fully equipped. A library, a victrola, and a radio receiving apparatus form part of the equipment. We have termed the group a "Mission," and its members we call "missionaries."

## INTEGRATION THROUGH EDUCATION

Each state of the republic has been divided into districts. The teachers of each district, about fifty of them, get together and for three weeks receive specific and practical training on the different aspects of their work. When the institute is over, the specialists (the missionaries) move to the next district and the teachers return to their respective schools.

Three things are significant in connection with these institutes. First, they are held in small villages where there is a rural school. The little school is taken as the center of a project. The teachers, under the direction of the specialists, try to work out the different problems of the rural schools in the one they have before them. The second feature is that the teachers are trained to do social work in the community. The village serves as laboratory to the teachers during the institute. They organize the men and the women into one form of organization or other, they vaccinate every inhabitant, they hold evening meetings with them, they teach games to the young people. We hope that a teacher who has done this type of practical social work during the institute as part of the training will be inclined to do it on returning to his or her community. Lastly, the training institute, once organized, continues functioning. The three weeks

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

over, each teacher goes back to his or her village, but in the place where they all met and where they will meet again the following year, there is left a sort of permanent institution. There will be a little model home, or at least a kitchen, where the teacher of the place may continue demonstration work in the village; there will be the library, the center of the smaller libraries in the district; there will be the site of the district teachers association. In the near future, there will be a dispensary under a trained nurse.

We have this year six of these "Missions" at work. By the end of the year they will have covered half of the republic. We are already preparing to double the group of "missionaries" so that next year the whole country may be covered by them.

Time is short and my story long. I have touched only on the high points of our enterprise. I have not been able to tell you about the thorough and far-reaching reform of our secondary schools; about the National University with the 10,000 students and its fine spirit of service; about the open-air schools of painting; the popular glee clubs; and the night school of music for the workingman. I could not tell you about the educational extension work by radio, broadcasting every night concerts, lectures, and classes; nor about our publishing de-

## INTEGRATION THROUGH EDUCATION

partment which last year published 89 pamphlets and bulletins with a total aggregate of 53,288,620 printed pages. Nor could I speak of the vocational schools whose pupils and teachers have organized into a co-operative society for the production and sale of the articles made by them as part of their training and who are running a department store in Mexico City for the sale of their products. I could not touch either on the work of our library department which, in five years of existence, has established 3,507 libraries of different types through the country and which during 1925 distributed 87,014 volumes.

There are indeed plenty of other things I might have mentioned, but after all, had I had the time and you the disposition to listen to me, little would have been gained by a detailed recital of the educational work in Mexico. What I have told you makes my point, I am sure. My point is simply this: the Mexican Revolution is vindicating itself. With all his material splendor, Diaz and his group of experts never opened a single rural school. Thousands of children right in the City of Mexico went without school because there were no schools for them. Illiteracy mounted higher and higher; misery and slavery was the lot of the peasant. The Indian was considered a calamity, always a liabil-

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

ity, except for projects of human exploitation in which case he immediately became an asset.

The Revolution came—ten years of hatred, of blood and fire; then years of finding our way amid the darkness and the ruins and then . . . light, light in abundance, and love. And with all this, as a result of all this, as a moral balance of it all, a vision of Mexico in its integrity—Mexico far and near, Mexico in its misery and shame, and Mexico with the wealth that is hers.

There is a new conscience in Mexico, and also a new impatience. We realize our weakness, but we also know our strength. The malady we know, but we think we have found a cure. We know now the value of the time Diaz wasted, and we know the value of the money squandered. One year means a century of good, and 1,000,000 pesos is one thousand schools for the peasants.

And do not think me boastful for presenting only the fine side of our effort. We know the taste of success, it is true, but we have also tasted failure and disappointment. But our failures are our lessons, and defeat has only incited us to try again. Mexico is coming into her own, and when the nation shall finally come of age, students will tell us that not a small part of the credit for its maturing should fall to the rural school.

# THE PROBLEMS CONFRONTING MEXICO

By HERBERT I. PRIESTLEY





## I

### BASIC FEATURES OF THE MEXICAN PROBLEM

There may be said to be at least three important aspects of the current problem of Mexico. The first includes those considerations which have combined to make it a retarded or dependent country. These are the basic features. They include all the elements arising from the human geography of the area and the social, economic, and political processes to which the inhabitants have been subjected, particularly since the beginning of the white domination. The second aspect is the reaction of the politically and socially conscient element in Mexican society toward those physical and social conditions, in their effort to bring into being a nation economically as well as politically independent, with a newly built social organism comparable in efficiency and culture to the advanced nations. Still a third phase of the problem turns upon the international situation created in large part by the program of rehabilitation; the main interest involves relations with the United States, the latter nation being, because of her proximity,

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

her more virile civilization, her commercial and industrial policy, and because of her international obligations assumed as corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, a potent factor in the development of Mexico's internal program; and, by the same token, in the development of her external policy.

Discussion of these relations will bear not so much on diplomacy as upon those wider and more penetrating influences which make the problem of associating with a neighboring race an extremely interesting, even an intricate problem. It is a problem into the continuous solution of which must enter the widest publicity, the most generally disseminated knowledge, and the profoundest sympathy if the result is to be of mutual advantage. Don Genaro Estrada, Sub-Secretary of Foreign Relations, has emphasized the fact that this is a problem of seeking a continual neighborliness founded upon justice and understanding; it cannot be posited upon mere interchange of diplomatic notes or agreements settling old scores, though these must be sought. It must be based upon generous determinations to seek the most friendly and honorable ways out of difficulties, and to prepare for their avoidance in future with the realization that the fact of vicinity cannot be done away with, but that the two peoples must live side

## BASIC FEATURES

by side through the centuries and that the best mode of doing so is to arrive at mutual understandings of temperament and of the working conditions of each race, points of difficulty being eliminated in anticipation of the event, harmonious intercourse being the result.

It is our duty, then, to realize that the most vital problems which confront the Mexicans are not in reality those of international relations with us, but those which concern the development of the Mexican nation to a condition of well-being for the masses, a condition of economic welfare and cultural advancement of the entire body, which will eliminate the feeling of incompetence and the resultant inferiority complex, and make for sane and predictable relations based on justice, common sense, and good will.

To return now to the topic of this first lecture: the basic physical conditions under which the Mexicans live. Mexico, representing the residual of the old Spanish colonial dream of occupying the entire continent of North America, is a country of some 766,000 square miles. The territory which we acquired by conquest and treaty between 1845 and 1853 amounted to more than 900,000 square miles, or more than half of the domain which secured its political independence from Spain in 1821. During

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

the war with the United States a much larger area than that actually ceded was occupied by American troops; it was at that time one of the proposals of our government to obtain cession of a very large part of the occupied territory. Though this idea was abandoned, that of adding pieces of the more southern area has cropped up again at intervals, until, in spite of the reiterated assurances of our government and the general reluctance of the American people, even their preponderant rejection of the idea, to increase the national domain—in spite of these visible and repeated manifestations of a complete change in our policy, Mexico looks upon future aggressions as quite within the realm of possibility, and resistance to them forms the unconscious background of intercourse between the two nations. Occasionally a Mexican publicist draws comfort from our growing hesitation to assume problems involving backward populations, but even this is scant assurance. The bogey of American aggrandizement hovers in the background, forming the basis of one of the most important elements in the sentiment of Mexican nationality—need of resistance to foreign absorption. To us, after more than eighty years, it seems strange that this feeling should subsist. It can be dispelled only by passage of time and by that

## BASIC FEATURES

mutual good will which determines in advance to avoid those complex situations which may inflame populations beyond the control of governments.

It is a mistake to think of the present area of Mexico as a homogeneous geographical entity. In fact, there is greater diversity of physical area than is to be found in the United States, and this diversity is accentuated by the compression of the continent here into a smaller longitudinal expanse than exists farther north and by the fact that Mexico is thrust down from the temperate zone into the tropics, while we lie within the temperate zone alone. To this characteristic is added that of the high altitudes found within the Mexican tropics, which, sheering away to the coastal plains in sharp descents, give the utmost inequality in temperature, rainfall, conditions of food production, and physical health.

The major geographic divisions into which the country fall are, across the north, the so-called Sonoran Desert, one of the most fertile areas in the Western Hemisphere, an area of hot lands, copious streams for irrigation, and, in the parts cultivated, of fabulous agricultural utility, much of which has been developed by American capital and industry. East of it lies the Sierra Madre Occidental, a region of marked elevation, where the climate is cooler,

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

where minerals exist in profusion and are extensively worked. Then the great Northern Basins, suitable, save in irrigated or natural oases, chiefly for grazing and mining. Then the Sierra Madre Oriental, rimming the Northern Basins with a range of lower altitude likewise crowded with mineral deposits, some of which have been worked continuously from the early times of the conquest and are still among the most voluminous producers in the country. The Northern Gulf Coast, with excessive heat and torrential rains, runs toward the similar hot lands of the Eastern Coastal Plain. This is the land of sugar, coffee, petroleum, and henequen, crops which have more frequently caused international disputes than others, save perhaps rubber. Rising from these hot lands is the low Chiapas Plateau, beyond it the Sierra del Sur, and in the center the most significant portion of the entire territory, the Great Central Plateau. Here the life of the nation has centered since long before the coming of the Spaniards, for reasons which are not far to seek.

One of these is the distribution of the rainfall. In the extreme north along the upper reaches of the Rio Grande and the Colorado, the annual precipitation only reaches about two inches a year; over a large area it is much less than twenty inches,

## BASIC FEATURES

serving grazing purposes only. Through the Central Plateau semi-arid conditions prevail, and agriculture is largely dependent upon irrigation. This is the home of the origin of American irrigation and of the prehistoric culture developed there because of the presence of that wild grass from which maize was developed—the great contribution of the American Indian to the world's food problem. Where rainfall exceeds fifty inches it is usually torrential and adapted only to tropical products such as coffee, sugar, vanilla, bananas, pineapple, and the like. The areas of heavy rainfall are the least hospitable to human life on account of tropical diseases. In areas of scant rain the increase of population is conditioned by the character of the soil, large sections being incapable of cultivation even with water.

The effects of altitude, rainfall, and climate are sharply seen in the distribution of rural and urban population. In much of the arid north the inhabitants number less than one per square kilometer. In Sonora, the seat of the governing element of today, the population is 3.5 per square mile. In Sinaloa it is 10.2, while in Nayarit it rises to 13. Approximately the same rate of increase runs southward in the center and the east. The great West Coast, with 154,000 square miles, nearly



## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

one-fifth of the republic, contains not more than one-twentieth of the inhabitants. The estimated average population per square mile was in 1910, 19.55 for the whole country, assuming a total of 15,000,000 now diminished by 750,000 in recent estimates of the Mexican Department of Statistics.

The rural population approaches its highest density only in the heart of the Central Plateau, where the land is fertile, the water supply fairly steady. The location of the cities is also illuminating; it is evident that towns have mainly followed agricultural development save in such mining centers as Pachuca, Guanajuato, and Monterrey. Almost no cities of significant size are below the 5,000-foot contour, and none are beyond the areas of ample rainfall. It is of course a corollary that the assessed value of rural property should follow the densest population and that prosperity should be largely confined to such areas. This is strikingly shown in the comparative densities of maize production, this being the principal food of the people, and its production the largest agricultural pursuit. The other food crops, beans, wheat, and chick-peas, are with immaterial exceptions produced within the areas of corn culture. Nowhere in the republic has the highest type of cultivation been reached; it is true that on the Central Plateau practically all the

## BASIC FEATURES

available area has been under cultivation or in the control of agriculturalists since before the close of the eighteenth century. But this does not mean that even this area is not capable of much more intensive cultivation or of sustaining a much larger population. It is clearly demonstrated why the Spaniards never succeeded in making stable plantations beyond the area of the plateau, which was, with the exception of a few mining towns, the limit of the urban population of the colonial epoch. The reason lies in the absence of irrigation water, or rather in its relative scarcity, and also in the continuance of primitive methods of tillage and water development. The direction of the streams, which crossed the line of march of the farmer and miner instead of coinciding with that line, as did the waterways of the United States, checked the effective occupation of the Spaniards at the line reached by their Aztec forerunners in the fifteenth century. The same problem confronts the Mexican government today, that of extending the effective areas of agricultural occupation; and this problem is conditioned by that of markets and transportation as it was in colonial days.

To sum up the physical conditions of life for the Mexican nation: there has been no advance, in the five hundred years or so since the Aztec population

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

and control was thrust northward to the region of the Tropic of Cancer, in the natural endowment of the indigenous population. Such advances as were made by the Spaniards themselves, beyond the agricultural limits of the sedentary natives, were made for the purposes of proselyting to the faith, of extending the field of mining operations, or of stock-farming, in which the representatives of the present population of the republic could have but the scantiest share, or for the purpose of holding a desert frontier against the continuously feared aggressions of the European colonizers of the true temperate stretches of the continent. The indigenous population was agricultural in the times of the Montezumas, and such it remains today, with but scant improvements in the field of communications, markets, methods of cultivation, or means of attaining a surplus and advancing in the scale of living and of culture. Indeed, their condition was worse after Diaz than at the coming of Cortes. It needs to be repeated that these limitations, imposed by nature, were nearly as potent against the prowess of the Spaniards as against that of the Aztecs. It is futile to rail against the selfish policy of the conquerors as the only agency which has held down the Indian population of North America. Spain gave of her spirit and religion to the

## BASIC FEATURES

natives as lavishly and as unselfishly as any conquering race within the view of history. She imposed her civilization with as much zeal as she possessed, and it has left an indelible mark upon every area, upon the Philippines, the West Coast of Africa, South America, the Caribbean, and Mexico. Even among the three millions of Mexican Indians who yet do not speak the Spanish tongue, measurable symptoms of the Spanish occupation, in a favorable sense, are seen to prevail.

Not only were the forces of nature allied against the progress of the red men and the white man alike in their conquest of the continent but the impact of the two divergent types of culture had its deleterious effect upon the physical life of each group. We do not know very much about the physical life and health of the red men before the coming of the whites. We have learned something about the early existence of diseases, the healing cult, and so on; but as to the general health and longevity of the primitive inhabitants we have the scantiest information. The sixteenth century censuses assure us that in large areas the population diminished rapidly upon and after the conquest, not only because of the actual armed struggle but because the life in houses, larger consumption of food, and unrestrained use of intoxicants, which

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

had been controlled during native rule, and the arduous toil in field and mine brought a rapid decrease of the population. The white man's diseases, such as smallpox, caused frightful epidemics. So to physical handicaps were added for Mexico those of the terrible sickness in the physical bodies of her inhabitants. The impact of white civilization has done but little to remedy, and much to increase, the vulnerability of the red man to disease. Nor has nature neglected to exact from him her toll.

The most widely disseminated of the ills which beset human life in Mexico, perhaps after those of the stomach and intestines, are the respiratory diseases and tuberculosis. The Central Plateau, where the population is most dense, is particularly the pneumonia area. The Northwest Coast and Yucatan share similar honors in prevalence of tuberculosis. Malaria and dysentery take frightful toll of life in the Central Plateau and in the southern sections. The almost universal occurrence of syphilis among the conquering population was remarked by Juan de Cardenas, a medical writer of the sixteenth century. It continues to be one of the most marked drains on the welfare of society, the rate of infant mortality being heavily increased by stillbirths due to it. It has been estimated that not

## BASIC FEATURES

more than half of the children born survive their seventh year, the average span of life being set at fifteen years. These are estimates made several years ago.

The statistics, partial in form, which exist for recent years down to 1924, furnished by the Department of Statistics, form no adequate basis for comparison, but it is certain that living conditions have not materially advanced in spite of increases in earnings. The more virulent forms of communicable diseases, such as yellow fever and smallpox, are always present or threatened. Last year a campaign was waged against the former, while now the Department of Sanitation wages an active campaign to rid the republic of smallpox by vaccination, to be repeated every five years. The physical condition of the people is one of the most profound difficulties in the way of national well-being; it has grown rather more difficult in recent years with the movement toward the cities for employment or escape from rural insecurity during revolutions.

If we turn now from the physical conditions and the diseases, which have been hostile to development of homogeneity, to a survey of the social influences which have colored the historical process, we shall see that in spite of certain humanitarian

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

and religious ideals, the life of the people has been dominated by the superposition of an alien exploitative element which had no interest in the elevation of the masses. That is, the forces which should have made for social cohesion were largely lacking. New Spain was an agglomeration of mutually hostile Indian tribes, whose primitive relationship had been lost sight of in the contest for possession of fertile lands and the rivalries of family and tribal groups competing for political power. Under this process the great early Mayan culture of the south had advanced to decay, and the Aztec power was in process of dissolution when the Spaniards arrived. Tribes were set against tribes, region against region. It was this which made the conquest rapid and easy. Nothing essential occurred during the colonial régime to remedy this. There were two essential features of the social policy of colonial days: the first was to reduce the Indian population to the Christian faith as the greatest gift which Spain could bestow; the second was to amalgamate the Indians racially. There could be no higher compliment than that of complete spiritual and physical identity of the conqueror with the conquered. But the ideal was impossible of realization because of the chasm between the two cultures, the paucity of the numbers of the Spaniards,

## BASIC FEATURES

and the overwhelming numerical supremacy of the Indians. Thus on the spiritual side the influence of the church was offset by the dogged persistence of native beliefs and practices, some of which were incorporated in modified form into the ritualistic observance of religion. The natives could not perceive the finer mysteries of the faith; as a superimposed cult it failed to reach the psychological needs of the people, who had made their own gods to whom they could cry in distress or admonish in necessity. So the new religion became a gloss or veneer which met few of the soul-needs of the Indians, while on the institutional side it afforded the basis for development of a hierarchy which dominated all activities of life, partly in competition with and partly as coadjutor of the political hierarchy, itself an imposition and development from without, apart from the consciousness of the dominated race. Hence religion, instead of providing that salvation from sorrow and suffering which was its purpose, became a vehicle for growth of a fanatical faith, an added link in the chain of a slavery which bound the Indian to the service of the white man.

The ideal of racial amalgamation espoused by Isabella the Catholic and reiterated in the laws of the Indies was likewise incapable of prompt real-



## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

ization. The institution of matrimony probably never had fewer zealous exemplifiers than among the swarms of soldiers and adventurers who flocked to the Indies. Even in Spain numerous kinds of variations from legal marriage had become institutionalized. The result was that in the Indies irregular unions produced an army of half-breed foundlings who began life as social outcasts at the bottom of the pyramid, along with the natives. Throughout the colonial period the half-breed occupied an inferior position socially, politically, and economically, from which he began slowly to emerge during the past century. The movement for separation of church and state, begun by Valentin Gomez Farias in 1833, was the first expression in Mexico of the rising class-consciousness of the mestizo group. In the War of the Reform, the French Intervention, and the consequent Reconstruction, and again since the fall of Diaz, the movement has been for the vindication of this element. The movement has been on the whole general throughout Spanish America. In Mexico it is the half-breeds, mixed with an Indian sprinkling, which are in political control. Socially the process begun by the roving Spanish soldier has continued with little or no abatement. Illegitimate births still run in Spanish America from forty to sixty per

## BASIC FEATURES

cent. In Mexico City a significant portion of the school population in the poorer quarters is said by directors of education to be ignorant of the identity of the father, and in many cases even of that of the mother. Among such waifs one meal a day is often the rule; it is furnished free by the federal school authorities. At higher levels of society the union of races continues even among recent foreigners. Mexicans pay scant attention to admixture of Indian blood, marriage occurring in obedience to natural preference; the foreign elements which amalgamate readily with Mexicans are notably the Spanish and German, to less extent the French and English. On the better social levels American admixture is infrequent. The significant feature of social evolution has been the rise of the mestizos, who absorb all contributing elements and form the basis of the social mixture out of which a nation is still to be formed.

But it has been one of Mexico's tragedies that for four hundred years the foreign group, with only slight native and half-breed participation, has had control of the natural resources of the country. Agriculture, mining, commerce, industry, the chief agencies for development of a people, have been either socially or legally denied to the underlings; until independence, the good positions in army,

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

church, and government were beyond their reach. The result has been a certain self-confessed incapacity mixed with discontent, producing an unfortunate inferiority complex which brings about two significant features of the present internal and international situations. First, as the successive waves of revolution beat upon the rims of power, the successful party struggles to possess itself of the elements of privilege and power as its predecessors have done, creating a situation new in personnel but not in spirit, and inviting renovation by another flood of dissidence. Second, it arouses hostility to foreign influence in the economic life. This means that the body politic marches steadily toward social liquidation unless the innate force of the people can through sage leadership stop these secular influences by learning to use rather than refuse the aid of foreign brains and capital, without which no modern state has been able to emerge from the primitive stages of the fight to control the benefits of nature, and without which all independent societies fall into the process of self-exhaustion, which menaces the unhappy but courageous people of Mexico.

The present régime hopes to build up the native capacity and efficiency with little aid from outside influence. There is a strong possibility of success

## BASIC FEATURES

in this program, as is shown by the cultural ability of the proletariat. This is perhaps best demonstrated in the manual arts, in which there has been a remarkable renaissance since 1911. Curiously enough, in spite of the supposedly utter annihilation of indigenous culture, the new awakening corresponds to the area of pre-Cortesian civilization, the Central Plateau. The location of the ruins of the ancient cities shows the distribution of a high social, political, and religious culture. Among the earliest of these are the ruins, now partially restored, of the pre-historic San Juan Teotihuacan, near Mexico City. Here the great pyramids of the Sun and the Moon, and the majestic courtyard and temple of Quetzalcoatl the Fair God, demonstrate a high culture and an inherent capacity for artistic expression only swept aside by centuries of foreign and caste domination. The true force of the Mexicans is in their manual and artistic skill, and upon that their future must be slowly built. Two or three years ago the idea was conceived of preparing an exhibition of the native arts. Among them is the ancient and honorable craft of pottery-making. Its chief seats are now in the states of Jalisco at old Tonalá, in Puebla, and in Oaxaca. At Tonalá the polychrome terra-cotta work is used for toys, figurines, and numerous objects of wide

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

utility. Clay vessels and water jars form a conspicuous part of the production. The lines on some of the jars are adaptations of old Aztec decorative art, on others it is Oriental. Oaxaca possesses a pottery of its own; the decoration shows the regional origin. The sarapes of Oaxaca show artistic appreciation in the use of natural color and material in making these articles which are the desire of all travelers and the apparel of the common people. Puebla, seat of important cloth-manufacture during colonial times, is also in the forefront in tile manufacture and pottery. The tiles are made into tablets for all sorts of interior decoration; sometimes entire exteriors, as of the famous House of Tiles, Sanborn's, in Mexico City, are made of fine Puebla tiles. It is still an important native weaving center. Sarapes are made in Tlaxcala, Aguascalientes, Coahuila, and Tezcoco. Finer forms of weaving come from Hidalgo, from Aguascalientes, Silao, San Luis Potosi, and other places, while each of these produce superior drawnwork and needlework. Fine hats of palm and willow fibers are made in several regions. In woodwork, chocolate-beaters, canes, polychrome chairs, and other furniture and domestic utensils prove that the native artistic expression has resisted diffusion of cheaper utilitarian articles from foreign parts.

## BASIC FEATURES

The development of this artistic capacity forms one of the bright spots in the current social history. Specimens of the handicraft of school children of the industrial schools, shown in the public sales department on a prominent business street, are far more beautiful and perfect than the products of rural industrial art. The latter are made by self-taught persons, while manual school work is subject to a great diversity of influences. These school products are an important part of the process of natural rehabilitation.

To conclude: Mexico acknowledges that she stands in bitter need of reform and rehabilitation along the entire line of her existence, in the physical, in the mental, in the moral and religious, and in the political phases of national life before she can measure herself favorably with the nations which are her source of emulation. In the physical realm there is still a long campaign for the development of agriculture, irrigation, and communications, in order to overcome the dissolvent force exerted by geographical isolation of parts of the republic and by the exigencies of climatic conditions. A tremendous task remains, of which the first beginnings only have been made in the development of public health and sanitation as the basis of sane social and family life. In labor, as in agrarianism,

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

a movement has begun which contains much of beneficent character for the elevation of the working classes, for imbuing them with a healthy and modest self-respect, but which shows also the symptoms of those characteristic weaknesses which accompany labor-movements everywhere. In Mexico the movement needs a new orientation which will save it from becoming the swaggering assertiveness of a mass long oppressed and just awakened to a sense of its privileges and rights without a sense of corresponding duties. It needs to be taught that capital, whose chief constituent of power is storage and preservation of surplus labor, is its friend and partner, not its enemy, and that many of the current practices of labor will in the long run destroy that partnership and wreck labor itself. In mining, petroleum development, and commerce, the advance of the country has been largely in the hands of men of enterprise and foresight; the country has its finest development here; the basic needs are those of mutual understanding, modification of procedure, and of basic rights, which will orient these fields of operations so that they will accrue to the benefit of the nation and of those who are legitimately engaged in them.

In education we must remember that the common people are in a rudimentary stage of develop-

## BASIC FEATURES

ment outside of the capital and a few of the larger cities. While in those places the results show what may be realized with time and money, these essentials must still be provided in the case of the masses. Leadership in education, sanitation, industry, moral regeneration, and politics, is largely dependent for years to come upon the Department of Public Instruction. But morality in private life and in governmental relations depends upon the economic well-being of the people, upon their health and sanitation. As we have seen, these essentials are still ideals, only in part realized. If it seems that this portrayal of the needs of Mexico paints too dark a picture of a vicious circle of malignant influences, it need but be said that the sentiments expressed are but an echo of the opinion of the Mexican press and the aspirations of Mexican officials and publicists.

If we turn in conclusion to the political needs of the country, we find much to be desired. A movement toward the liberation of the municipal governments began in the early stages of the revolution, it being hoped that local responsibility would create a competent governing class for these districts. So far the hope is vain. The states also have a logical place in the scheme of local government; so far but few of them have risen to the



## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

heights of the reasonable hope reposed in them. We shall not see them develop effectively until the forms of democracy are more fully realized, when the process of developing dictatorial governments shall have yielded to the redeeming influences which have begun to work. Political parties must yet be amalgamated into permanent organizations with platforms which they may take before the people with assurance as issues upon which intelligent public opinion may be expressed in votes that will be respected and counted. The hazard of one's entire property and life must cease to become an element of entry into political life. After that, the problem of the permanent peace, now secured by the army, will have yielded to the more delicate but less urgent demands of a regenerated society. After that, the problem of renovation of the political power will lie with the public conscience and not in felicitous selection of personalities backed by military cabals or business connections. When that time comes the problems of society and government will be capable of solution in terms of energy and need comparable to those of the advanced peoples. It is yet a far goal, but its attainment is possible with the exercise of common honesty, unremitting energy, dauntless optimism, wise judgment—the essentials of the highest statesmanship.

## II

### THE PROGRAM OF REHABILITATION

In the introductory lecture of this Conference a picture was drawn of the fundamental reasons for a general reconstruction of Mexican society. It was a gloomy picture because it dwelt upon the restrictions imposed by nature and by man upon the development of a normally happy human association in that environment, and it took but scant account of the remedial agencies already set in motion, or in prospect, to bring such a happy association into being. At this time it is necessary to examine the working policies and the constructive acts of the Mexican people and government, so as to estimate the value of the policies and the efficacy of the acts. It cannot be a general apologia of the process, nor yet a wholesale condemnation of it; the enthusiastic revolutionist will occasionally discover that his cause is getting faint praise, while the reactionary or conservative will hope for more wholesale criticism.

In 1542, Fray Bartolomé de las Casas had succeeded in causing the enactment of a series of laws, known afterward as the "New Laws," which

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

sought to relieve the conquered Indians of Spanish America from the bondage into which they had fallen through the institution of the system of society which the conquerors had brought with them and had adapted to their new environment. But just as Queen Isabella's policy had become a dead letter when brought face to face with the economic facts of the New World, so the altruistic conceptions of the enthusiastic Dominican fell before the force of vested interests and established custom.

The social revolution of the twentieth century in Mexico is confronted by much the same inertia as that which defeated that stormy petrel of the sixteenth century. The ideal of las Casas was to put the Indian upon the basis of a free wage-earner, so that he might without oppression grow into that physical and spiritual unity with the conquering race which was contemplated by church and state. The modern ideal is an identical conception, with the agency and aim of the church substituted for by those of schools and economic betterment—a difference which merely records a changed social ideal in a later century. In neither case is the Indian himself the initiator or the principal agent in the development contemplated but the passive instrument in the hands of the active element of society. Just as the opposing groups of

## THE PROGRAM OF REHABILITATION

Spaniards sought their own advantage in the unfolding of an Indian policy, so do the modern people of Mexico seek the general welfare in the reduction to civilization and culture of the retarded masses. In one point humanity has made marked advance since the days of the conquest, in that there is no one today who professedly seeks selfish advantage through keeping the backward portions of society in subjection.

The social revolution in Mexico is a proletarian movement. It seeks to place, and has largely succeeded in placing, the proletariat in the position of chief political power, through the agency of its public officials. Many of the latter have risen directly from the proletariat, and all profess to govern in its name and for its advantage. The form of government under which the system works is that of paternalistic socialism with a republican framework. It has to meet all the difficulties, then, inherent in a situation in which form has outdistanced fact; the essence of socialism is a basic belief that organized society will come to act altruistically through enlightened self-interest; the essential fact of current Mexican history is the attempt to omit much of the evolutive process in departing from the retardation of the nineteenth century and to arrive directly at a modern Utopia

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

*"netamente Mexicana"*—100 per cent Mexican. Every broad-minded American of the United States is in harmony with the growing desire of the peoples of Latin America to find their spiritual and moral unity, to seek the means of encouraging their own growth from within. There have been so many reiterated declarations of this attitude and desire, on the part of the American government and people, that it is superfluous to dwell upon it here.

The Constitution of 1917, brought forth after five years of revolution as the sequel of a declared determination to amend the Constitution of 1857, for which the revolution had thus far been fought, is the aegis under which the present social reforms march. Practically all of the new provisions, with the exception of those referring to labor, are crowded into the famous Article 27, the direct authorship of which is credited to José N. Macías and Pastor Rouaix, prominent members of Carranza's political family. It contains provisions placing the national government in theoretical dominium over all lands, waters, and mineral deposits, and giving it authority to grant, sell, expropriate, or redistribute any or all private or public property in these things, on the theory that they are public utilities, save that subsoil products and waters are inalienable and may be used by

## THE PROGRAM OF REHABILITATION

persons only under government concessions. Both ownership and concessions are limited to Mexicans by birth or by declaration with respect to such property or privilege. Church properties are nationalized; the redistribution of property is confided to the national government and to the state governments within their boundaries, and provision is made for the establishment of communal holdings of redistributed lands and for their payment in either state or national bonds. Contracts and concessions made after 1878 were made subject to revision, and the executive authority was empowered to nullify such of them as prejudiced the public interest. A great deal of legal talent, a number of judicial decisions, and a mountain of diplomatic correspondence have intervened between 1917 and the present in efforts to affirm or to deny what is perfectly obvious to the mind untrained in legal formalities or diplomatic subtleties, namely, that this article expresses the determination to turn back the clock on the exploitation of Mexican lands and natural resources to the year 1876, the beginning of the Porfirian epoch, and begin anew with the nation in full control of its physical assets, the foreign exploiter and developer being deprived of the advantages he had secured by previous legislation. That is, the article of the

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

Constitution is plainly retroactive in conception, purpose, and wording.

Article 123, "Of Labor and Social Welfare," provides a schematic device for bridging the abyss of caste, race, and privilege, which had been created by the failure to realize that spiritual and physical unity which were the ideals of Queen Isabella, Bartolomé de las Casas, and the repeated admonitions of the Laws of the Indies. It is not a provision regulating labor, but regulating industry and natural resources to fit the ideal and desirable conditions under which labor may best be utilized to promote the interests of the masses—the proletarian horde which had developed neither rights nor privileges, quite as much because of its own inherent inability to meet the dominant element of society on a competitive basis as because of the will or purpose of that dominant element. The impact of the civilized society upon the barbarian had deprived the latter of practically all but its physical existence. Article 123, like 27, provides that enabling legislation shall be enacted by both the states and the federation, and this has been done, with the inevitable result that there has been a certain amount of disparity in the laws and confusion in their application. In the case of the agrarian legislation provided for under Article 27,

## THE PROGRAM OF REHABILITATION

there has been a greater uniformity than in labor legislation under Article 123, because thus far the chief attention of the federal government has been dedicated to the land problem. Labor regulations have been enacted for the federal district and the territories by the federal government, but elsewhere by the states. That is the reason why there is such diversity of conditions in the labor field in various parts of the republic.

It needs to be pointed out that these constitutional provisions for the welfare of the proletariat, which is preponderantly Indian or lower mestizo in composition, are, by political and social tradition, placed in the hands of the residuals of the upper class element left in the country after the destruction or exile of the previous ruling class, or in the hands of leaders who rise by natural vigor of personality from the ranks of the proletariat itself. The weakness of this situation is that the campaign for remedial action raises a furor of intellectual and emotional excitation, under cover of which the newly arrived aristocrat is likely to forget the missionary character of the enterprise and indulge in practices of self-enrichment or political improvement to the detriment of the class he professes to serve. It is the altruism of the socialistic theory in conflict with the forces



## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

of self-interest and tradition. On the other hand, the strength of the program lies in the fact that the awakening consciousness of the masses makes it possible for them to penetrate more quickly and set aside with a semblance of popular opinion the more selfish of such self-constituted leaders. It will be a long time before the system of dictatorial governments set up by military agreements will come to an end, but each of these will successively find its task more impossible as political education widens its influence and diversity of interests make it necessary for the conflicting elements of society to seek accommodations for the general welfare. It was comparatively easy for Porfirio Díaz to establish and maintain a dictatorship. For each of his successors in turn the task will grow increasingly harder, until in the fulness of years the institution comes to a merited and unlamented end.

It needs also to be remembered that constitutional provisions are without sanction (save by executive decree in emergency) until the corresponding enabling acts or statutes have been passed by the Congress, usually under executive suggestion or impulsion, and have been legally promulgated by publication. And the statutory amplification of the constitutional precept is likewise without operative effect in administration until that

## THE PROGRAM OF REHABILITATION

department of government concerned has made what are known as the "*reglamentos*" or operative ordinances under which the law shall be executed. Beyond this point, the various officers which have the execution of the laws in their hands in the widely distributed parts of the republic, have also their own local interpretations to apply to these *reglamentos*, the result being that when the terms of the Constitution are applied in the actual performance of the acts they are intended to control there is a wide variety in practice, depending upon the intelligence, selfishness, or social aim of the individual officer. When he is a member of the alphabet element, the just administration of the laws is likely to be unduly attenuated.

The constitutional precepts promulgated in 1917 were for a considerable period carried out intermittently, if at all, by presidential decrees, sometimes under specific authorization from the Congress. Save in certain cases, notably in agrarian reform, petroleum legislation, and federal education and labor laws, the stage of statutory enactment and the passage of reglementation has only been recently reached. The revolution under Madero contained the germs of the program, but his apostolic vision of destroying dictatorship, his futile cry for effective suffrage and no re-

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

election, were defeated by his idea that he could bring about efficient administration by compromising with the "safe and sane" element and accepting them in his Cabinet. Madero was a victim on the altar of the spirit of toleration; none of his successors has yet dared to imitate his example; the full success of the Revolution awaits the arrival of the capable man who can make that spirit the guiding principle of his régime without vacillation and sacrifice of principle. Carranza, imagining himself the protagonist of the Latin emancipation, dedicated himself to the attempt to fight the influence of the United States, particularly to a nationalistic solution of the vexed oil problem. Like Benito Juárez, he saw the solution of the political problem in the establishment of the presidential succession in civilian hands; like Juárez, he was in advance of his epoch in this idea, and he lost his hold and his life because disorder assailed him from every side and iniquity honey-combed his administration. After him Obregón was occupied with a continuation of oil regulation, the struggle for recognition of his government, banditry, revolution, the Claims Conventions, resumption of the payment of the national debt, moralization of the public service, the agrarian program, a wide labor-movement, and other pressing exigencies of state.

## THE PROGRAM OF REHABILITATION

The advent of President Calles marks in some respects an epoch in the course of the Revolution, in that the government finds itself in comparative peace; with a disciplined army, a full treasury due to increased taxation, and, certainly during the earlier part of the period, a large amount of public and international confidence. The régime has not been free from a number of those internal weaknesses mentioned as characteristics of preceding ones, and it has been threatened by small revolts such as the one undertaken at Urécuaro, last January, and the more recent one in Guerrero. But it has been able to initiate two complementary movements which are really one in spirit, a wide and far-reaching program of material reconstruction and an inclusive and significant series of regulatory laws. Thus, nine years after the promulgation of the Constitution of Querétaro, the Mexican nation finds itself on the full tide of resumption of the theory of the gentle-spirited Isabella and the fanatical Las Casas.

It is of course unjust to Calles's predecessors to credit him with the full responsibility for the whole program. The reconstructive efforts begun in the time of Obregón were of great value. Notable among these was the amendment to the Constitution whereby the educational program was placed

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

under federal control, and the task of national education given a beginning. Under the enthusiastic direction of José Vasconcelos, federal aid to education reached the theoretical budgetary appropriation of 50,000,000 pesos, which would have yielded the sum of \$1.50, American money, for each inhabitant of the republic, if the appropriation had not been cut through government exigencies to 37,000,000. With the sum available, a secretariat, a normal school, several handsome primary schools, and a stadium were built in the capital; books were translated, printed, and distributed; meals were provided for indigent pupils; and, in the states, notably in Coahuila, Yucatan, Jalisco, and others, a similar program of building and of organizing educational campaigns was set in motion. As I visited the school establishments of the capital last month through the courtesy of Dr. Puig, the present director of education, it was a pleasure to see that the buildings erected will stand for centuries as a monument to Dr. Vasconcelos as their initiator and the evangelist of the idea that the development of the Mexican people must come from the spirit within, utilizing the elements of the immediate environment.

The Ley de Ejidos or Agrarian Law, also regulated and promulgated under Obregón, accelerated

## THE PROGRAM OF REHABILITATION

a significant land movement. In August, 1925 it was announced that one-third of the land division program had been completed. Since 1915, 12,000,000 acres had been given. The total cannot be reached for many years, as it contemplates distribution of 40,000,000 acres. The present cultivated lands in the republic are estimated at over 30,000,000 acres only; pastoral lands at over 120,000,000; and forest lands at nearly 44,000,000 acres. Happily, many, though not all, of the abuses of economic and political character which have accompanied this distribution thus far are being eliminated. The present emphasis is upon making the utilization of expropriated land imperative under penalty of loss, and upon providing financial and material aid for those who will actually use the lands into which they have been put in possession.

The petroleum laws of the Revolutionary period have been many, and the situation with regard to them has been vexed. Consideration of them comes properly under the topic of my next lecture, as they chiefly concern this Conference on their international side. In connection with the program of rehabilitation it may be said here that petroleum legislation follows the spirit of Article 27 in nationalizing subsoil products for the benefit of the Mexican government and nation. With respect to

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

oil properties acquired after the promulgation of the present Constitution there seems, I am informed, to be no present difference of opinion; while on the other hand the status of properties acquired before the enforcement of the Constitution still requires further understanding. This applies to the most recent petroleum law, that of December, 1925.

With that law, and the so-called "Ley de Extranjería" or "Alien Property Law," we find ourselves upon the full tide of amplification of the precepts of Article 27. By it no foreigner may acquire lands or waters in a strip 100 kilometers wide along frontiers or 50 kilometers on coasts, nor may he be a shareholder in Mexican companies which may acquire such ownership. Inside these border demarcations he may form a minority part of such a Mexican company upon relinquishment of the protection of his government with respect to such property. Possession of property before the enactment of this law may continue until the death of the owner, or for ten years in case of moral persons. Adjudication of legal inheritances by persons incapable thereof under the law is to be effected through the interposition of the national Department of Foreign Affairs. The law does not affect industrial, mining, petroleum, or other non-agricul-

## THE PROGRAM OF REHABILITATION

tural leases of lands. Like the petroleum law, this one is of profound international interest. This is largely due to the fact that very many foreign holdings located within the forbidden zones of coast and border, whose owners had previously accommodated themselves to the Agrarian Law or Ley de Ejidos whereby they surrendered areas of cultivated land for the rehabilitation of the small agricultural people who surrounded them, now find themselves without hope of bequeathing their property to heirs or finding an acceptable market for it. We are not concerned here with the diplomatic controversies which have been elicited by this legislation. Nor are we now concerned with the economic fate of those foreigners who possess lands which fall under the future effects of this law. Our present interest lies in its effect upon the economic life of the Mexican republic.

This law seeks, as has been said, to get back in time to the situation in which there were no foreigners in possession of border lands. By the same token it seeks to get back to the time when there was no one else there in effective exploitation of the wealth of the earth. If we take for example the great West Coast, which has recently had such a boom in production of perishable food products, bringing wealth to scores of people and nearly a



## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

dozen communities, we find that this exploitation was begun by foreigners under the impulse of propaganda; that their example was quickly followed by native Mexicans of all economic conditions; and that all have succeeded in producing wealth for themselves and for the nation, in taxes and increased land values, in so far as they have not been impeded by the struggle with insect pests, which they have fought with their own private resources. That is to say, under the impulse of hoped-for gain under natural conditions the process sought for by the Mexican government in another recent law, the Law of Colonization, has been obtained in ample measure without the interposition of legislative limitation or control. If it is anticipated that the further continuance of this process would result in the numerical predominance of the foreigner in this field of enterprise, it would seem that the suitable precaution would be to provide legislative limit to the further acquisition of property by aliens.

But the law goes one radical step farther than this. It provides effectively that all foreign properties shall, within a period fixed by the hazards of life and not in a definite term of years, be capable of possession only by native or naturalized Mexicans. This is to legislate not upon an actual state

## THE PROGRAM OF REHABILITATION

of affairs but upon a future contingency. The hope and expectation is that the cultivable area of such an empire as the West Coast will be absorbed by Mexican enterprise and energy within a reasonable term of years and that the prosperity of the region will be favorably rather than unfavorably affected by the new law. I hope with complete sincerity that this may be the case. The lamp of experience seems to show, however, that the native Mexican is numerically insufficient in this area to do the thing contemplated; if the *hombre de empresa*, the man of enterprise, the real undertaker, is to be introduced into this sparsely settled region, he will have to be brought from the Central Plateau, or he will have to be a colonist from some foreign shore. The experience of Mexico with colonists has been almost uniformly unhappy; only two years ago a colonial enterprise of Italians in Sinaloa was wrecked upon the rocks of improvidence and neglect—this was one of scores of schemes. As for the highland dweller of Mexico, he suffers as much inconvenience and unwillingness to confront the hazards of life and investment in the tropical area as does the foreigner. Hence it would seem to be a slow process which the laws attempt to invoke. Hence, too, it would seem that even the properties already developed by foreigners

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

are to be left to go back in a term of uncertain years to a market in which there are no purchasers, with the result that the chief aim of the present holder will be to get all out of the land which he can, and let the rest go. This means the retrogression of the property, neglect of improvements, decrease of production, loss of property values, and diminution of the taxable base. The Colonization Law and the Law of Agricultural Credits may do much to counteract this influence, and it is to be hoped they will do so.

Before its adjournment after passing the laws referred to above, the Congress authorized the president to promulgate a whole series of reconstructive laws; eighteen were issued before the middle of this last June during the recess of the legislature. A new railway law, a new sanitary code, a telegraph and telephone law, an immigration law, a law controlling private charities, one providing for construction of roads and bridges, a postal code, a radio law, a law prohibiting monopolies and regulating co-operative societies, a forestry law, the Colonization Law already mentioned, one providing regulations for revision of contracts and cessions prior to 1876, an electrical law, several regulatory laws for the army, and a law governing the operations of insurance com-

## THE PROGRAM OF REHABILITATION

panies were all decreed. Some of these are not yet in full effect. There still remain on the executive program of legislation, but not yet fully studied, revisions of the Civil and Penal Codes and the Codes of Procedure. A new mining law, enacted some time ago, has not yet reached the regulatory stage, and is the subject of conferences between the federal and state authorities, chiefly as to what division shall be made of the taxes to be collected and modes of enforcement. This latter law is based upon the principle of nationalization of minerals, a status which these have always had, the petroleum law approximating the latter product to the status of other mineral subsoil materials. The relementation of Article 123, "Of Labor and Social Welfare," is also pending. Article 130, which states the position of the government toward religion and nationalizes church property, imposing certain restrictions upon observance of cults, is to reach the legislative stage next September.

The new institutions of credit founded under the recent fiscal legislation, the Banco de México and the Banco Agrícola, are the sources of much pride and hope to the present administration. The organization under which they have been placed was conceived and worked out by Mexicans, without foreign advice, but has won the approval of

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

conservative observers. The Banco de México is a sole bank of issue, the notes of which have secured a place in the public confidence and circulate freely on a parity with gold. The Banco Agrícola is devised so as to assist planters in their operations, making loans to them on satisfactory signatures and the security of crops which are held in warehouses during the terms of the loans. This will release agriculture from the usury to which it has been traditionally subject, making for prosperity and tranquillity in agriculture—where agrarian aggressiveness does not prevent. The management of the banks seems to warrant aid in meeting international obligations, improving the credit of the country. Safeguards are thrown about the tendency which wrecked the old Caja de Préstamos of the time of Díaz and Limantour, that of political absorption of financial resources. As a part of the Banco Agrícola scheme, a few experiments are to be tried in financing the very small land-holders. Most of the capital so far subscribed to these institutions is of government origin, though there is a movement toward the absorption of certain regional and successful independent banking houses. It is perhaps not too much to say that the present régime goes to trial on its financial enterprise with far more public confidence than might have been

## THE PROGRAM OF REHABILITATION

expected, and that the signs are encouraging for a continuance of that confidence.

It will be seen that most of these laws are only in the initiatory stage and that they represent a faith in the future and in the efficacy of mere laws to bring about proper conditions out of distressing ones. It will inevitably prove that features of these laws will produce effects contrary to those anticipated, and they will have to be changed to meet conditions. The Mexican faith in legislation is a failing too common to all lands where the forms of democracy prevail for us to be unduly critical. With this faith in legislation there is to be observed a growing sense of the need of moralizing the public service. Inveterate evils still prevail in many branches. But each week brings a statement of some new reform observed here. Now it is the customs service, now the work of municipal inspectors, again in other branches. The same need prevails in the affairs of general business operations.

One of the interesting characteristics of the times is the general faith in the efficacy of education for all the needs of society. We who have been through so many experiments in this field and have had cause to lament the scant results obtained, shall have to be willing to wait for the Mexicans to

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

learn that not all their ills will be cured by improvement in the scale of culture and the dissemination of knowledge. It is a fact that the cause of education grows in importance and in the support it receives. The schools are more numerous and more effective than formerly. There is a tendency for the city schools to outstrip those of the outlying districts, both in equipment and personnel as well as in support and official attention. There is a wide gap between city and country. It has not been possible to obtain the support from *hacendados* which the laws require for the establishment of rural rudimentary schools because of the unsettled condition of rural affairs. In many of the cities there is still a great lack of initiative. Private schools are encouraged and placed under the inspection of the Ministry of Education so as to harmonize their work with that of the state schools. Most of the impulse comes from the federal government save in a few states and cities. The president of the republic has taken up a program for the extension of agricultural schools. As far as official excitation is concerned the upward path is indicated. The great defect is lack of funds wherewith to meet the incessant demands. A movement for open air schools, begun in the capital by Dr. Puig, the secretary, promises a cheaper

## THE PROGRAM OF REHABILITATION

variety of construction, which will be serviceable if widely spread as it will leave money for other essential purposes.

The place of public sanitation throughout the republic has been assured by the promulgation of the new sanitary code, which goes into effect to-day. The Department of Public Sanitation depends directly upon the president's office; it is headed by Dr. Gastélum, whose ideas are revolutionizing the health of the areas to which his measures have reached. Opposition to the new code is now in the vociferous stage, and no doubt some of its provisions will have to be abated before the pressure of necessity. But in many constructive ways this office has brought results on one side of the vicious circle of which the Mexican problem consists. It is no unusual sight to see police wagons rounding up the dregs of society and forcing them into the public baths. Thousands daily are so treated in the capital, to their no little dismay. At the same time, they are subjected to compulsory vaccination, to be repeated in five years. Food vendors are obliged to maintain effective their certificates of freedom from communicable diseases. A beginning is being made in the cure and reform of abandoned women. A model bacteriological station is in process of completion at Popotla; it is



## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

under the direction of Dr. Zozaya, a graduate of Harvard; it will be the admiration of American specialists, who will be invited there upon occasion to conduct researches in the regional diseases which may be their special personal interest. Sanitary stations are established in the municipalities of the federal district; these will now be spread to the states as the new code goes into effect. Smallpox will be eliminated by universal vaccination. Tropical diseases will be met by active campaigns. The Rockefeller Institute is aiding in this work in a small way, and it is to be hoped that as conditions improve its participation will increase. Milk has been brought under control by certification and pasteurization, after a campaign of bitter opposition on the part of producers. Meats are inspected, and herds, in an effort to get rid of a very prevalent tuberculosis. The foot-and-mouth disease, recently appearing in the south, has added to the work of this department and has not been fully eradicated. This sanitary service is going to make continuous demands upon the public treasury, but it is a basic necessity; without health there can be no education, no economic progress, no moralization.

As to the place of religion in the life of the nation there is much popular misunderstanding and disagreement, in Mexico as well as in the United

## THE PROGRAM OF REHABILITATION

States. In times past the church won merited disrepute for its intervention in politics. One would not have to read many chapters of Mexican history to realize that. Nor has the church as a social institution availed itself of the opportunity for service outside of the spiritual realm as it might. On that side it is a decadent institution. It is a mistake, however, to load all the misfortunes of the Mexican people upon the shoulders of the ecclesiastical organization. The recent flurry of antagonism between the government and the church began last February after the archbishop of Mexico published a letter in which he reiterated assertions that the Constitution was unacceptable to the church. With a government prone to accept such a challenge, hostilities were inevitable. The question is not concerning the faith and belief of the people, though the officers of government profess no faith as a general rule. It is a problem of internal administration of the church. The government insists upon its right to regulate the licensing and ministration and registry of clericals, to limit their number (and this is often done in a way neglectful of the rights of the people to have what they consider a sufficient number of ministers), and to possess the property of the church. One is compelled to believe that if the government had paid

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

no attention to the letter of the archbishop nothing would have happened to its prestige. The people, especially the feminine portion of society, are predominantly Catholic and entitled in conscience to the form of worship they desire. The church as a political entity receives little sympathy, nor does the government win respect by inconsiderate acts toward its members. It has been a pleasure to note the decrease of excitement on this subject and to feel that the unfortunate clash of antagonisms will disappear as each institution occupies itself with its primordial mission.

The place of the army in the national life of Mexico is hardly appreciated by Americans. It has been for many years the citadel of the political power. Today the Mexican army is probably a more effective organization for its purposes than ever before. It is energetically commanded, effectively drilled, well uniformed, hard worked, and is growing in self-respect and *esprit*. It has recently determined upon an expenditure of 7,000,000 pesos for equipment from Germany; it has a new college for officers at Tacuba which will soon open under a new organization and will be open to entrants of all social classes. The reorganization of the army, now composed of some 53,000 men and with the officers and special forces numbering some 70,000, is to be

## THE PROGRAM OF REHABILITATION

effected next September. The conception of the army as an influence for the increase of the health and morale of the people is a growing one. The decrease of its size is an important issue, General Francisco Serrano, former Secretary of War, points out that its problems do not concern the national frontiers but internal police. It would seem to an outside observer that much of its work could be performed by effective rural mounted police.

The labor movement concerns more people than any other group save the agrarian population. It has resulted in the organization into unions of a large number of artisans, the figures have been given out as reaching near the two-million mark, but they may be received with some discount. The largest labor group is the Mexican Federation of Labor. This organization calls itself moderate in policies, the more radical element being organized into the General Confederation of Labor. Among the unions independent of the large organizations are the railway men and the electricians. Outside the unions there still exist numerous workers, among whom campaigns are conducted with varying success. The purposes of the unions are similar to those of such organizations in the United States, and the benefits accruing are similar, with the same attendant dangers. The labor element has in gen-

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

eral the full support of the government. The present secretary of labor in the president's cabinet, Mr. Morones, is a laborer by origin. The position of labor has vastly improved under this rapid organization of forces, a work which has been fostered in large measure by the American Federation of Labor. The weaknesses of the labor situation lie in the fact that increases of wages have not brought corresponding rise in living standards because of increased cost of living; there has not yet been organized any satisfactory system whereby savings can be made; and the education of the workers has not proceeded very rapidly. Further defects have been the utilization of the unions for political purposes, and an appreciable tendency for labor to look with undue emphasis upon its rights rather than its obligations. The natural tendency has been thus to emphasize the reluctance of capital to see eye to eye with labor, though there are recent examples of harmonious action in this respect.

These are the judgments and criticisms of a friendly observer of the Mexican people for a number of years, and are the fruit of painstaking study and observation. They are addressed to you and to Americans who may see them as independent judgments, not as admonitions or advice to Mexicans. The happiest thing about the Mexican situa-

## THE PROGRAM OF REHABILITATION

tion after all is that it is in the hands of Mexicans. Their determination to bring better things to pass has the best will of all Americans. In the crucible of public opinion and under their own guidance toward effective organization their future lies. Under another topic, "The United States and Mexico," some considerations will be offered, largely apart from the field of diplomatic relations, which touch the broader aspects of the contacts of the two peoples, in which there is room for the action of both nations toward a more perfect understanding.



### III

## THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

Happily the affairs of nations are not circumscribed by commercial relations or exchanges of diplomatic notes. Trade is competition, a more or less neighborly struggle to look out well for self-interest; diplomacy is the first line of defense of a nation's policies, the velveted touch of the gauntlet of war. Attention to it is apt to overbalance the wider human interests which constitute the real bases of international contacts, lending grace to our reactions to the tendencies of other lands, making the world safe for the pursuit of happiness and the unfolding of the latent capacities of humanity.

The historical development of the Western Hemisphere (two continents with an area of 16,000,000 square miles) left it in the hands of but three of the peoples who waged the colonial conflicts for its possession. The English, the Spaniards, and the Portuguese divided up the land and planted in it their institutions, social customs, and languages. (The French and the Dutch have only their little linguistic islands in Quebec, the Caribbean, and the Guianas.) There are nearly as many



## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

people in Mexico alone who speak only an Indian language as there are those in the whole hemisphere who use French (they are under 3,000,000) or Dutch (about 200,000). Portuguese is spoken in Brazil by nearly 30,000,000 people. The great reaches of the two continents contain about 78,000,000 Latin Americans in twenty republics, and 120,000,000 Anglo-Saxons and assimilated immigrant stocks in Canada and the United States. Compared with Europe we have, through the influence of geographical position and the colonial movement and conquest, so little diversity in race and language that the solidarity of the hemisphere ought to be easy to attain. (The Independence epoch, beginning a century and a half ago, has added to these advantages that of a species of political uniformity.) The whole hemisphere enjoys at least the forms of democratic republican organization. In name or in actuality all the Western lands are free and independent republics vouchsafing to their citizens a broad measure of racial and religious tolerance. The well-being of the masses through sanitary care, economic freedom, and intellectual and spiritual growth is the aspiration of society and the policy of governments. Not excluding Canada, which maintains an imperial connection, the ties which bind us to non-American

## THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

entities are platonic and tenuous. We are, in actuality, that separate sphere of which Thomas Jefferson dreamed. And we have the broad bases of continental understanding and sympathy prepared and at hand as has no other part of the world.

With the point of closest contact between Latins and Saxons lying along the Rio Grande, it is inevitable that in that region should arise the sharpest of the problems which influence the two civilizations in their mutual reactions. In view of the past territorial expansion of the United States, and her present active expansion in trade and foreign investment, it is but natural that Mexico, because of her geographical location should consider herself the advance guard of the Latin culture, feeling, and political and economic independence. This sentiment has been recently strengthened by Mexican success in launching a program of nationalistic legislation, by the shock to American prestige in the Tacna-Arica controversy, and the political storm in Nicaragua.

In spite of the common character of our revolts against the colonial mothers England and Spain, and notwithstanding our similarity of governmental forms, the diversity of race, language, and culture between the northern and southern peoples has left to us but a single all-pervasive influence,

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

that of trade relations. Expansive commercialism and export of American capital for mining and petroleum development and agriculture have brought most of the Latin American countries (save the three remotest of South America) into economic dependence upon those citizens of the United States who engage in foreign exploitation. Old immoral loans and imperious demands of maritime defense have brought some of them into the position of virtual protectorates. The result is that the trade balances of the Latin republics, showing usually favorable relations between export and import, really represent on one side of the ledger the outgo of domestic capital for foreign goods, and on the other the depletion of native resources by foreigners whose profits are taken out of the exploited area and spent abroad. The exploited country receives only the proceeds of taxation, the wages paid to native workers, and a modicum of native imitation and participation. Only in agriculture is there increment, for mining and petroleum development is exhaustive and destructive. She suffers added disadvantage because the carrying trade and the major construction enterprises, such as port-building, railroads, and irrigation projects, are largely in foreign hands.

Between the United States and Mexico diplo-

## THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

matic transactions have continuously reflected our dominant political and economic policies. Since these have habitually been expansive, either for acquisition of more territory or trade, or, in the sequel, in support of claims for damages and injuries incident chiefly to Mexican revolutions, the diplomacy of Mexico has usually been directed toward limiting our expansion, minimizing responsibility for damages, and, sustaining the theoretical equality of states, asserting the right to emit laws of internal character which profoundly affect the international situation. As long as the present theory of absolute sovereignty holds, as long as the United States continues a creditor nation with indefinite capacity to increase the export of manufactures, human energy, and capital—a movement accompanied by corresponding increase of tropical imports predominantly in the hands of American nationals—the diplomatic policy is not likely to undergo profound change.

The chief incidents in the history of our relations with Mexico may be recalled by the names of Henry Clay, John Quincy Adams, James K. Polk, Nicholas P. Trist, Robert McLane, Gadsden, Seward, and Lincoln. Their aims were frank purchase of Mexican territory, or its conquest, or the making of loans professedly beneficial to Mexico

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

but generously advantageous to the United States. We need not, unless we wish, recall the names of Burr, Blennerhasset, Jackson, or Poinsett, some of whom were scamps and the others blunderers in the same long process of attrition with our southern neighbors. Nor need we attempt to clothe the long line of Mexican political generals and their puppet ministers with the garments of truthfulness, unselfishness, and patriotism, for which they were anything but distinguished, in order to realize that we ourselves might have improved the situation by less rapacious self-seeking. Our Latin-American diplomacy has its general justification in the demands for defense created by European dangers, the force of our auto-colonial migration, and "the abatement of nuisances on a neighbor's doorstep." In more recent times, Blaine's "Big Sister" reciprocity program became subject to the vicissitudes of American internal policies; the "Big Stick" policemenmanship of Roosevelt became the basis of the current interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine as a defense policy. It has led and driven us into revising our traditional attitude in recognition of new governments, and made us intolerant toward the inherent right of revolution. Our continuous tutelage over Latin countries in politics and finance has brought us scant results in five Pan American con-

## THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

gresses, formal successes in an International High Commission, and disappointment in the Pan American Union. Treaties multiply and conferences go on, with the laudable aim of stopping political revolutions and assuring American life and property in weak republics. We have made repeated declarations that the Monroe Doctrine is not aggressive, that we do not desire more territory—and these are indubitable truths—but we refrain from reading into the Doctrine any constitutional immunity from our aggression by allowing the southern republics to underwrite the security by joint declaration, though such a course was suggested by American statesmen of such opposite tendencies as William H. Taft and Woodrow Wilson. And so the rise of anti-Americanism, expressed in Pan Latinism, League of Nations membership, in Calvo and Drago doctrines, in a wide range of writings by vociferous South American publicists, and the nationalistic program in Mexico, still go without definitive answer from ourselves.

The reasons lie, generally speaking, in the fact that diplomacy must be opportunist. In international law we can arrive at no formula limiting the sovereignties of states. Once established, they preserve their theoretical autonomy even though they do not maintain stable government or comply with

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

international obligations. We cannot decide what are the rights of non-user countries in resources of nature which they attempt to withhold by law from exploitation until they reach capacity to do the development. Thus national boundaries and political minorities in control estop the operation of the economic law of supply and demand. We have never decided just how far we should protect our nationals in their gainful pursuits in retarded countries of unstable political power. In fact, it has been the policy, shared by the British and French, to restrict such protection to remonstrance and claims for damages after the offense; obviously this is not protection, save only as it deters from acts which would bring on war. In Mexico, warning of the obvious consequences of injury to legally acquired rights has been the dominant refrain in diplomatic intercourse. This policy of delayed action works hardship to our nationals abroad; but as has been observed, it prevents drifting into general wars of conquest, retribution, and colonial expansion, or more equivocal forms of intervention which come to the same thing. The American investor abroad thinks that his country should be more prompt and firm in upholding his rights. On the other hand, the American public which is unidentified with foreign enterprises feels that the

## THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

taxpayer should not be eventually levied upon nor the national interests hazarded by punitive measures or interventions to support voluntary colonial projects and investments of foreign speculators, since they have entered dubious fields of enterprise with full knowledge of the dangers to be encountered, in expectation of large financial returns. If the gamble goes against them, why make the American public pay? This attitude is often characterized as retrogressive, defeatistic, pacifistic; it has, however, two noteworthy merits: it allows the retarded nations to advance most rapidly toward capacity to develop latent resources and talent; and it has at present the most evident prospect, in view of the recurrent hazards of popular elections in democracies and the troubles of colonialism in the French and British empires, of becoming a settled international policy.

It may happily be said of our financial relations with Mexico that the debt, now amounting to over \$750,000,000 represents none of those immoral impositions or scandalous transactions which marred the early days of private loans to Caribbean and Central American countries. The residues of iniquitous loans by avaricious North American houses to unprincipled dictators, though scaled down to meet reasonable demands, still vex us in



## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

other quarters; but the repetition of them is unlikely because of the awakened morality of American business methods enforced by our executive branch of government representing public opinion; for our people are in complete harmony with those of Latin America in their desire to rid themselves of military dictators and make the forms of democracy vital forces in national life. The Mexican debt is happily adjusted to moral terms, and Mexico began this month to re-establish her credit by paying 11,000,000 pesos of interest on the external debt, and we have assurances that the railroad debt interest will shortly be paid.

With regard to our commercial penetration, a forceful and true picture of which Mr. Saenz gave us last week in his lecture on "Foreign Investments and Mexican Nationalism," we need to keep two aspects in view. First, the debt was created largely by introduction of improvements, such as railroads, by organizations from our country. Another large part of it is deferred interest. Current obligations can best be met by insuring the continued prosperity of the railroads and of the American industries which give them so much carrying trade. If the nationalistic program causes slackened prosperity, payments may become irregular or lapse, while interest mounts, and the financial bondage of

## THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

Mexico grows deeper. Second, there seems to be in the Latin mind a subconscious, if not openly voiced, idea that for the American expansion there is a collective responsibility, or some central guiding mechanism, which seeks with malignant ingenuity to scatter loans and investments throughout Latin America for the specific purpose of placing those countries in economic thralldom.

It would be childish to pretend that American capital does not seek systematically for new fields of investment, and disingenuous to aver that large vested interests avoid imposing their political will to secure conditions favorable to themselves. But if we were to begin a historical search for first causes of this condition, we should early find ourselves at the beginning of European history in America attaching responsibilities to Spaniards and Englishmen alike for the peculiar genius with which each imbued their colonial efforts, and to the Indian populations for the spiritual reactions they developed under the conquest. We cannot attach blame to peoples for the character of their historical development. One may watch the fleet hound pursue the timid hare across the stretches of autumn stubble, with variant emotions as he may happen to be owner of hare or hound, but he would be of strange judicial bent who would attach moral

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

turpitude to the hare for flight or to the hound for pursuit. Biological laws beget economic forces and before these, nations are like dumb beasts in their responses. If there is responsibility to be attached to Americans for commercialism, may not the same be attached to Mexicans for permitting political conditions which prompt the export of private capital to the unproductive vaults of Canadian banks instead of its investment in fomentation of natural resources at home? The evolution of democracy and the passing of dynastic governments has left great peoples without other guidance in directing their primitive forces than instinctive self-interest; an instinct latterly enlightened by growing appreciation of the fact that the far-off aim of the good of all races is better than the immediate conquests dictated by group consciousness or nationalistic policies.

Joaquín Edwards Bello, in his book *El Nacionalismo Continental*, puts the case of joint responsibility forcefully. He laments the economic domination of Europeans, and especially of North Americans, over the Latin nations, averring that it has completely destroyed the true principle of sovereignty and relaxed the public morals "to a degree known only to the ancient Greek helots." "What is lacking in the south," he says, "is morality, a

## THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

sentiment of justice; in the eighteen republics divided by frontier customhouses and Chinese walls of prejudice, the morality of the representatives has degenerated to such an extent that the attorneys of foreign houses which exploit mines, the public services, and the industries, are enabled to win immoral lawsuits, enriching a lot of canaille who divert to their own personal benefit the alienation of the common liberty. Throughout the whole continent the really live forces of the nations are already in the hands of foreign companies. . . . The man of street affairs who chews gum and looks at the world as his oyster calls us banana republics and one-horse-power nations. His bestial imperialism is sharpened by the successes obtained in South America during the last four years. . . .”—and Bello gives an edifying account of them in a detailed list.

What is the best method for Latin America to adopt in the face of this absorption? When the young women of Veracruz attempted to protest against the invasion of 1914 by abstaining from use of American manufactures in their apparel, they were surprised to find themselves literally without clothes to wear. Is it surprising that the suffocating influence of the United States should be met with a reaction of nationalism that finds expression in the

## THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

sentiment of justice; in the eighteen republics divided by frontier customhouses and Chinese walls of prejudice, the morality of the representatives has degenerated to such an extent that the attorneys of foreign houses which exploit mines, the public services, and the industries, are enabled to win immoral lawsuits, enriching a lot of canaille who divert to their own personal benefit the alienation of the common liberty. Throughout the whole continent the really live forces of the nations are already in the hands of foreign companies. . . . . The man of street affairs who chews gum and looks at the world as his oyster calls us banana republics and one-horse-power nations. His bestial imperialism is sharpened by the successes obtained in South America during the last four years. . . . .”—and Bello gives an edifying account of them in a detailed list.

What is the best method for Latin America to adopt in the face of this absorption? When the young women of Veracruz attempted to protest against the invasion of 1914 by abstaining from use of American manufactures in their apparel, they were surprised to find themselves literally without clothes to wear. Is it surprising that the suffocating influence of the United States should be met with a reaction of nationalism that finds expression in the

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

writings of the Mexicans Carlos Pereyra and Isidro Fabela and in the legislation of Calles in amplification of the precepts of the Constitution of 1917?

It is not to be questioned that the southern republics have on their side the basic elements of international law and of national sovereignty, and they are entitled to make the best of the argument. But it should be remembered that no one is responsible for the exuberance of our expansive force. There is widespread inability in the United States to understand the viewpoint of Latin non-users of national sovereignty and economic opportunity who rail at us in constant misinterpretation of American diplomacy in the responsible and irresponsible press. In the case of the Platt Amendment, Cuba's thorn in the flesh, it is never remembered by Latin critics that Cuba owes her separation from Spain, after years of desultory warfare, to the intervention of the United States; that security from European complications on Cuban soil has been one of our prime defense policies since our origin; that we would have been justified in international law in retaining the complete sovereignty; or that the amendment was imposed, not primarily as a restraint upon Cuba, but upon the aggressive acquisitive instincts of ourselves. We are unable to understand why peoples prefer political anarchy

## THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

to law and order imposed by interventions which they invite by one faction or other. The figures show how disproportionately American investments have grown in Cuba since the amendment. In Mexico, however, and Chile, a corresponding growth has been shown without any amendment. This does not prove Mr. Saenz wrong in his record of our infiltration or its consequences to the Indo-Latin peoples, as Carranza loved to style them. It merely goes to show that legislation is not wholly efficacious in controlling the resultants of economic forces. That the Latin republics have not been kept free from excessive penetration of American capital is due to the vacuum they have left in their economic systems through neglecting to occupy fully their own national sovereignty and to develop and use their own capital and their men of enterprise in productive investments. It was not laws issued by Díaz which estopped the Mexicans from building their own railroads, their auto roads, raising their own crops, developing their own mines, or producing and controlling their own petroleum. North Americans obtained priority in Mexican industries through daring and enterprise—a gambling spirit which the Mexican capitalist might have shown had his political system promised a gambler's chance instead of sure loss. The

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

laws were just as good for Mexicans as for Americans, so far as they went. They were intended to put the petroleum industry, for instance, out of reach of political action. The new Mexican nationalistic legislation for petroleum is defended as legislation which will not change the actual process of oil development nor injure in practical ways the vested foreign interests. It will simply put that development directly under the control of the Mexican government. If the government always acts sanely, the oil people will not suffer; and if the revenues are turned to the benefit of the Mexicans, the latter will have no complaint. In the field of agriculture the foreigner is to be completely eliminated from the border and coastal zones in course of time. If his removal is used to encourage Mexican speculators to buy up lapsed legal rights to improved property in a market destitute of purchasers, the social revolution will lose much of its validity and the sympathy it evokes.

The agricultural problem in Mexico is of the first importance, for if the land is to be developed there must be supplied not only capital, but colonists, and these to succeed must descend to the scale of living of the primitive Indian. The United States cannot help much here, for she does not furnish colonists, but capital, which has now been



## THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

discouraged. Thus the southern republic has undertaken to fill the vacuum in agriculture with her own capital and her own or European colonists. She has perhaps only the remainder of the present century in which to work out the problem, for by the end of the century the situation regarding the production of foods for the world will have reached a stage in which exploitation of expanses of virgin land for huge immediate gain will have passed forever. The population of the United States will be over two hundred millions; that of China and Japan, Mexico's other Pacific neighbors, will have advanced through similar numerical ratios. The dilemma predicted by our agricultural sociologists will be at hand. We shall then have an economic factor in civilization against which national laws like those of Mexico, or continental protective devices like the Monroe Doctrine, will bend like feeble reeds in a flood. If Mexico by that time shall have succeeded in filling her great arable spaces with industrious producers of food, the vacuum will be filled, and the continental equilibrium will be maintained. Otherwise the lugubrious prophecy of Lucas Alamán will come to pass.

That noted Mexican historian found in 1851, when he finished his great history, that the capital city of his country was filled with wealth and

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

luxury due to private energy, but that the nation was bankrupt because of the failure of its government to foment industries and provide for the national defense. The remedies he suggested were return to the orderly government of the viceroyal days, to the practice of true religion, and to the honest use of the public funds. Unless these things were done, he averred: "Mexico will be indeed a land of prosperity, for its natural resources assure that; but it will not be so for the races which now inhabit it. For it seems destined that the peoples who have established themselves in it in divers and remote epochs should disappear, leaving hardly the memory of their existence. Just as the people who built Palenque and other admired cities in . . . . Yucatan were destroyed in such a way that no one knows what they were or how they were destroyed; just as the Toltecs perished at the hands of the barbarians of the north, no memory of them remaining save their pyramids; . . . . and just as finally the ancient Mexicans fell beneath the power of the Spaniards . . . . so also the present inhabitants will be ruined without arousing even the pity which the ancient owners received. To the Mexican nation of our day may be applied the words of a celebrated Latin poet concerning one of the most famous personages of

## THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

Roman history: *Stat magni nominis umbra*, nothing remains but the shadow of a name in other times illustrious."

During this conference it has been shown how Mexico is exerting herself to avoid this menace. Her problems and handicaps have been indicated, and steady fingers have been pointed at her shortcomings. Enough has been said to demonstrate that the menace will be for years to come an ever proximate contingency, in many ways outside control of men or governments. For the moment, while our mutual intercourse is beclouded by misunderstandings regarding farming lands and oil deposits, there are elements of diplomatic accord which indicate a modicum of sanity on both sides. Old boundary disputes are approaching final settlement by adjudication of the ownership of *bancos* on the Rio Grande and by tests in court of titles to valuable lands in Ciudad Juárez and El Paso. The diversion of the waters of the Colorado is being studied in preparation for equitable international distribution. The Mixed Claims Commissions have in hand damages originating since 1868. Our disappointment over the decision of the special commission in the Santa Ysabel cases is allayed somewhat by the filing of a petition to bring them to a rehearing. It is to be hoped that in these cases,

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

which are thought to test the validity of the claims convention, international honor will be maintained and substantial justice done. While the business of the commissions is pending, there is every reason for both peoples to expect that the terms of the convention will be adhered to, that no unjustifiable momentary advantages will be sought, and that the results will bring to an end our "Century of Misunderstanding." The treaty of last year, governing clandestine migration and transport of injurious drugs, has undergone recent reglomentation in Washington by conference. It will aid in combatting that illicit introduction of Mexican laborers into the United States which has caused so much concern to their government, to American society, and to the immigrants themselves.

Outside of the field of diplomacy are the less troubled aspects of the intercourse of the two peoples. The interflow of the two populations across the border reflects the differences between our economic levels. Americans in Mexico number from fifteen to twenty-five thousand, while Mexicans in the United States must reach nearly to the million mark; more extravagant figures are sometimes given. The naturalized and native American Mexicans, especially in the Southwest, have long been a conspicuous part of our population. The net in-

## THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

crease in immigrants from Mexico was 89,190 in 1924, and 32,000 in 1925, and it is running toward high figures this year. Quite probably the labor element will fall in number when prospective measures become effective. The southwestern states feel the need of limiting this stream in order to prevent increase of destitution and reduction of economic and sanitary standards. Our labor groups are insisting on it, with encouragement from those interested in social and economic standards; employers who face scarcity of labor are interested in bringing Mexicans in. The Mexican government is anxious to have restrictive measures adopted by the United States in order to avoid the continuous drain on its society, where there is a habitual labor shortage, especially in agriculture. Our border country, especially New Mexico, where the Mexican population is so large that Spanish is an official language and a Mexican-born gentleman was recently governor, presents population problems of much concern. Mexican observers agree that their countrymen who come to us return in large numbers, to disseminate somewhat improved social and economic standards; and in its continental aspect it may be questioned whether the demographic problem will not reach a quicker solution by the continuous free passage of laborers to

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

and fro across the line. The immigrants we receive are from the best labor stock of the northern states of Mexico; their influence is widespread; they have a natural physical and mental superiority over their southern brothers, and have already made the upper tier of states distinct in character from those of the remoter areas. Immigration must never be left unrestricted, for sanitary necessity has shown the menace of tropical diseases, which now threaten our large population centers through almost every port of entry, whether by land or sea. There needs to be aroused a greater consciousness of our responsibility among Mexican labor immigrants, for there is no truth more vital to the United States than that our people cannot be entirely happy and free while the people of Mexico are ignorant and wretched. At the upper end of the social scale we find in our great cities, notably in New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and in several Texas cities, groups of political refugees who only infrequently enter our industrial fields. They publish newspapers in Spanish in half a dozen cities, and wait, too often without mere watchfulness, for a turn in the tide of politics which will allow them to return home and resume power. Their activities create a distinct phase of the border problem which requires constant attention.

## THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

The American colony in Mexico is an effective group. The representative element has high business and social standards. Chary and apprehensive as to what the new laws may bring about, they are almost uniformly affectionately disposed toward the country and its inhabitants. It is hard to think of them as absentee landlords and exploiters of an impoverished race, as the revolution characterizes them. Toward individuals there is no expression of hostility; it is the impersonal collective menace which arouses opposition. The most unhappy point of contact lies along the Mexican side of the border, where lamentable conditions of vice, paying tribute to municipal greed, have created conditions shameful to the United States and Mexico alike. We should remember that the border is the heel of Achilles of our national military defense, where a demoralized society or a disaffected one may be a distinct menace in any foreign complication.

Mexico complains, with reason, of much unfavorable criticism and ignorance of her life and aspirations on our part. There is a deep resentment against our film plots which represent the villain as a Mexican, overcome at last by a virtuous Westerner. Our newspapers too frequently reflect the active petroleum propaganda of a few years ago,

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

and articles whose main distinction is distortion of truth through search for "news" values probably do more to keep up Mexican distrust of us than does our expansive commercial policy. Mexico has set herself resolutely to correct the effects of misrepresentation. Improbable stories are current about the amount of money dedicated to this purpose, but there is reason to believe that some of the efforts employed react unfavorably. Undiscriminating praise of Mexico by so-called American radical writers, and Chamber of Commerce junkets to the capital are among these. More valuable is the legitimate propaganda fathered by Mexican governmental departments, especially the publication of historical and diplomatic documents by the secretariat of Foreign Relations. This work seeks the co-operation of American scholars. The summer sessions of the University of Mexico are a legitimate propaganda of peace and good will, where Americans may acquire an excellent Spanish and a view of Mexican life and customs. This summer the presence of John Dewey and Felix Adler at the summer session insures a degree of distinction in philosophical and scientific education of which many Americans are availing themselves. Reciprocal knowledge of the United States is scantily provided for by a few university scholarships, but



## THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

hundreds of Mexican students come to us annually to study agriculture, mining, chemistry, or law or medicine. Technical training obtained in the United States by Mexicans is now a potent influence; like the remarkable spread of English, it is symptomatic of the appreciation which the people of Mexico feel for the finer American influences which are not absorptive.

With Mexico governed by a group thoroughly committed to the Labor party, the closest point of contact is now through the American Federation of Labor, which was active in the organization of the Mexican Federation, the Confederacion Regional Obrera Mexicana, known anagrammatically as the "Crom." The American Federation is the most potent agency for teaching liberal rather than radical tendencies in Mexican labor circles, a fact which should cause its leaders to reflect seriously upon their responsibility. With the government in the hands of labor the problem is not how to relieve the workers of abuses, but how to guide them into and keep them in reasonable attitudes as the effective partners of capital and the employing group in order that society shall not be further disrupted as the workers rise to better economic and intellectual levels. The labor element professes to number two million organized workers at this time, practically

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

one-seventh of the population. If they avoid establishment of unreasonable proletarian rule hostile to other elements of society, the American Federation, whose voice is listened to with sympathy in Mexico, may claim a large part of the credit for the safe transition from industrial slavery to liberty.

The most sincere appreciation of American life comes in the popular adoption of our forms and usages by voluntary assimilation. There has been no active propaganda for this, but it is the result of Mexican travel and observation. Perhaps the most obvious transfusions are in modern athletic interests. Mexicans play very good baseball; the pink sheets are full of such words as "*beis-bol*," innings, outs, and so on, with those of the fistic sport of "*box*," tennis, and basket-ball—the English words being incorporated into the running Spanish text with a perfect abandon of assimilation. Flashing sport costumes brighten the fields and playgrounds. Young women are no less active in these games than young men; one finds feminine charm reinforced by the same decorative arts as prevail among our own present generation. Social custom tends to amalgamate with ours; there is the same freedom of custom, choice, and decision in courtship; and marriage occurs with parental ac-

## THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

quiescence, rather than with respect for the older Spanish observance of parental convenience. In education the classroom methods, the ideals, the attitudes of teachers and pupils, all testify to the fact that pedagogy moves in the same direction with them as with us. Most of the teachers trained abroad come from our schools and universities. Near the cities a modern type of architecture which approximates the bungalow style, with the garden outside instead of inside the house, marks the areas of finest improvements. No one has had to urge a propaganda for the spread of the automobile. All these things are incorporated into Mexican life as part of the unifying process of civilization; they are hardly thought of as adoptions of Americanisms, but are rationally incorporated into the soul and being of the nation. Every admonition, every comparison in the press or public discourse exhorts the Mexicans to adopt the methods and practices, and the underlying philosophies of "*los países cultos*," of civilized countries. The training of Mexican lawyers, physicians, and engineers include more and more the English language and the technique to be found in English textbooks. Writers like Taribio Esquivel Obregón and Emilio Rabosa disseminate wide understanding of our political life and legal institutions.

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

There is a reciprocal, though less marked, influence upon the United States by Mexico. Spanish is spoken understandably by more Americans than is any other foreign tongue. Study of Spanish literature and history spreads, and Spanish American writings are found to possess cultural values hitherto unconfessed. Growing numbers of us want to know Spanish American culture, political and social institutions, seeing in them an interesting variant reflex of our common mother Europe, without desire to add to the percentages of Latin American trade or to seek fortune on alien and dependent shores. In our art and literature and in our social relaxations and amusements there is a continuous, if not always felicitous, appreciation of the forms and modes which accompanied the spread of Spanish arms and religion in the southern part of our country.

The Spanish and Mexican influence which once dominated more than a third of our area is now seen bursting the bounds of latitude and entering the spiritual realms of our nation. Near to those fields whence once the Spanish trader drew his peltries stands a laboratory, and in it a tablet, to Howard Taylor Ricketts of the University of Chicago, "whose career . . . was cut short by typhus fever contracted during his investigation of that

## THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

disease in the City of Mexico." Reciprocally, young Mexicans today are employing their technical skill not only in creating a new fatherland, but in building up American industries by contributing scientific technique to their vocations. And so we have *The Weavers* here, not only of cultural ties between our two lands with Spain and England, but also to and fro across the Rio Grande, in many fields of human endeavor. The Mexican, unique in his origins and survivals, gives to us, composite in our blends, a widespread touch of color in our romance, song, and history; he spreads over the firesides of our homes the genial tiled roof of his ancestors and sets his Mayan temples on our modern business streets. From us he takes the influences of service, which we must multiply if we would check the suffocating force of economic ills, supplant the querulous reactions of nationalist designs and diplomatic legalisms with the warmth of neighborly respect and admiration, if we would rise to our full mental and spiritual strength in making the whole creation move "toward that sublime, far-off event."



## INDEX





## INDEX

- Adler, Felix, 164  
 Agrarian Law, 122, 125  
 Agrarian party, the, 47  
 Agricultural Credits, Law of, 128 f.  
 Alamán, Lucas, 157  
 Alien Property Law, 124  
 Aliens Land Law, 27 f.  
 American colony, 163 f.  
 American Federation of Labor, 165  
 Banco Agricola, 129 f.  
 Banco de Mexico, 129 f.  
 Beals, Carleton, 19 f., 27  
 Bello, Joaquin Edwards, 152  
 Caja de Prestamos, 130  
 Calles, President, 22, 42, 44, 60, 63, 67, 121, 154  
 Carranza, 4, 22, 120, 155  
 Catholic Church, the Roman, 6, 57  
 Central Plateau, 127  
 Chapultepec, 51 f.  
 Chiapas Plateau, 92  
 Chihuahua, 8, 62  
 China, foreign investments in, 15  
 Cholula, 57  
 Coahuila, 122  
 Colonization Law, the, 126, 128  
 Confederacion Regional Obrera Mexicana, 39 ff., 47 f., 165  
 Constitution: Article 27, 23, 46, 116, 124; Article 123, 45 f., 116; of 1857, 114; of 1916, 114  
 Cortesian civilization, 105 f.  
 Crowder, General, 16  
 Cuba, foreign investments in, 16 f.  
 De Cardena, Juan, 98  
 De las Casas, Fray Bartolome, 111, 116  
 Dewey, John, 78 f., 164  
 Diaz, Porfirio, 4, 6, 22, 24, 28, 60, 62, 83, 118, 130, 155  
 Doheny, Edward L., 19  
 "Dollar Diplomacy," 31  
 Dunn, Robert W., 9 f.  
 Eastern Coastal Plain, 92  
 Economic conditions, in Mexico, 50  
 Education: Department of, 64 f., 67, 79; in Mexico, 63, 75  
 Estrada, Don Genaro, 88  
 Fabela, Isidro, 154  
 Farias, Valentin Gomez, 102  
 Federation of Labor, 38 ff., 47 f., 137, 165; table, 39  
 Feudalism and the labor element, 33, 35 ff.

## SOME MEXICAN PROBLEMS

Foreign investments, in Mexico,  
11

Freeman, Joseph, 17, 19

Gastélum, Dr., 133

Geographic Divisions of Mexico,  
91

Gompers, Samuel, 41

Great Central Plateau, 92 f., 98,  
105

Guanajuato, 94

*Hacendados*, 35 132

*Hombre de empresa*, 127

House of the Indian Student, 55

Huasteca Petroleum Company,  
45

Huerta, de la, 4

Indians, 55, 57, 72

Institutes, teachers', 80

Isabella, Queen, 101, 112, 116

Jalisco, 105, 122

Juarez, Benito, 24, 120

Labor, Department of, 44

Letcher, Marion, 8

Ley de Ejidos, 122

Macias, José N., 114

Madero, 4, 22, 119

Mexico, agricultural problem,  
156; American colony, 163;  
aristocracy vs. people, 4; the  
army in, 136; a Catholic na-  
tion, 57, 136; climate of, 77;  
debt of, 149; diseases in, 98,

134; economic conditions, 50;  
education in, 63; federal or-  
ganization of, 62; feudalism in,  
33; foreign investments in, 8,  
15; foreign powers, 6, 12, 14,  
29; geographical variations, 55;  
inhabitants of, 61; institution  
of matrimony, 102; integration  
vs. dissociation, 6; language of,  
59; local industry, 106; mili-  
tary intervention, 20; nation-  
alism of, 7, 15; nationalistic  
policy, 28, 30; open-air schools,  
76; physical features, 89;  
political interference, 10; popu-  
lation, 94; pottery-making,  
195; railroads, 56; religion in,  
101, 134; a rural school, 67;  
rural teachers, 80; social or-  
ganization, 46; Spanish in-  
fluence, 59, 95; subsoil rights,  
23; taxation, 26; three prob-  
lems of, 87; wealth of, 8;  
women's organizations, 49

Mexico City, 12 ff., 33, 35, 45,  
55, 62, 69, 71, 75, 83, 106

Mining Code, the, 24

Missionaries, 80

Missions, 80, 82

Monroe Doctrine, 88, 146 f., 157

Monterrey, 35, 94

Morones, Secretary of Labor, 42

Nayarit, 93

Nearing, Scott, 17, 19

New Laws, the, 111 f.

Northern Basins, 92

Northern Gulf Coast, 92

# INDEX

- Oaxaca, 105 f.  
 Obregon, Taribio Esquivel, 4, 56,  
     120, 122, 167  
 Orizaba, 37  
  
 Pachica, 94  
 Palenque, 158  
 Pastry War, 20  
 Pereyra, Carlos, 154  
 Petroleum laws, 123 f.  
 Petroleum production, 11  
 Phoenicians, modern, 18, 21, 25,  
     29  
 Platt Amendment, 16  
 Public Instruction, Department  
     of, 109  
 Public Sanitation, Department  
     of, 133  
 Puebla, 35  
 Puig, Dr., 132  
  
 Querétaro, Constitution of, 121  
  
 Rabosa, Emilio, 167  
 Railroads, 56  
 "Reciprocity treaty," 17  
 Reformation, 6  
*Reglamentos*, 119  
 Revolution, the Mexican, 3 ff.,  
     21 f., 75, 83 f., 121  
 Ricketts, Howard Taylor, 168  
 Rio Grande, 92  
 Rockefeller Institute, 134  
 Roosevelt, Theodore, 146  
 Rouaix, Pastor, 114  
  
 Rural schools, in Mexico, 67 ff.  
 Rural teachers, in Mexico, 80 f.  
  
 Saenz, Moises, 150, 155  
 San Juan Teotihuacan, 105  
 Sarapes, 106  
 Serrano, Francisco, 137  
 Sierra Madre Occidental, 91  
 Sinaloa, 93  
 Social organization, 46 f.  
 Sonora, 62, 91, 93  
 Spain, New, 100  
 Statistics, Department of, 99  
 Strikes, labor, 44 ff.  
 Subsoil rights, 23 f.  
  
 Tacuba, 136  
 Taft, William H., 147  
  
 University of Mexico, 164  
 Urecuaro, 121  
  
 Van Dyke, Dr. Henry, 22 f.  
 Vasconcelos, José, 75, 122  
 Vera Cruz, 20 f.  
 Villa, 4  
  
*Weavers, The*, 169  
 Weaving, 106  
 Wilson, Woodrow, 19, 147  
 World-war, 59  
  
 Young Men's Christian Associa-  
     tion, 13  
 Yucatan, 122, 158  
  
 Zozaya, Dr., 134













